

CLASSIC MUSIC NEVER GETS OLD

# DOWN THE LINE



## STEVE SCOTT:

AN EMOTIONAL TOURIST

SLIDE  
JEFF ELBEL + PING  
THE PREDATORS  
BRIAN GODAWA

ISSUE 13 JULY 2012  
DOWNTHELINEZINE.COM



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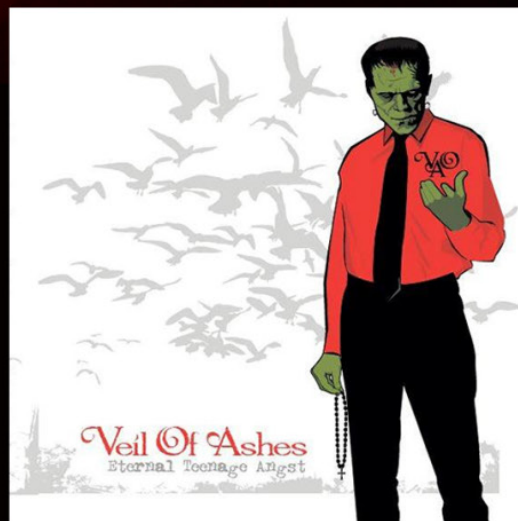
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*(Freedom Firm did not buy this ad nor do they endorse this magazine – just givin' ya food for thought)*





## THE COLLECTIVE LIVES!

The Down The Line Collective is still moving forward, although a bit slowly. You can still get Western Grace's punk rock masterpiece *Take Back The Scene* at their BandCamp page ([westerngrace.bandcamp.com](http://westerngrace.bandcamp.com)). If you like what you hear, download the digital version for free or contact Josh on Facebook to purchase a hard copy.

There are still a few other releases that we are working on, but the biggest one is a new release from alterna-rock legends Veil of Ashes! This will actually be a collection of demo songs from the early 90s, but mastered by Jason Martin of Starflyer 59 fame to sound as good as major label quality radio hits. Details are still being worked out, but the cover is finished and you can see it on the Veil of Ashes facebook page. Be on the lookout for *Eternal Teenage Angst* in the near future.

<http://downthelinezine.com>

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# DOWN THE LINE

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IF YOU MOVE Don't lose your computer – you won't be able to download the newest issue without one.

WRITE US Letters and comments need to contain your full name. All submissions become property of Down the Line E-zine and may be edited or condensed. Or even printed out and framed if you really kiss our... um... never mind....

## VISION:

Down the Line covers bands that explored the intersection between faith and art in the 1980s through the early 1990s - even though they were probably never accepted in to what is called "Contemporary Christian Music" because they were too edgy or alternative or liberal or for whatever reason. Some of these bands may still be making music today, and others may have moved on. We cover these bands (active or dormant) as well as any new projects by former members of these bands and any new bands that may have the same spirit as these bands.

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# LETTERS TO US

## More Articles That Rock

I've written about Michael Knott for @Image\_Journal here: [ow.ly/cee0M](#), thought you might enjoy the read. :)

My supplemental Knott piece for that essay is here: [ow.ly/cee88](#).

My essay for @Image\_Journal / @Patheos on Undercover is live. It's definitely in your wheelhouse. :)  
[ow.ly/cgg8n](#)

I'm really glad you exist. You're chronicling the life of a sub-culture that few others have.

Chad Thomas Johnston  
@Saint\_Upid

*(okay, so I cheated a bit on this one – it is a combination of tweets and not an actual letter, per se. Just tryin' to keep up with the kiddos and what they think is hop today. Besides, Saint Upid writes some cool stuff and he follows Rachel Held Evans, so go check him out)*

## Love for Doc Love

Great article guys – thank you. The 77s meant a lot to me as a “fringey” girl in a small town, choosing to be a Christian. I appreciate that Mike brings the story to spiritual thoughts and the theme of reconciliation with band members, and seems to have a good grasp on what those years meant.

JpusaColleen

*(So what is this about? Why, none other than our online exclusive article “Mike Roe: Doc Love dishes on the soon to be released reissue of Sticks and Stones”. Check it out if you haven't seen it yet.)*

## Historical Resources Rock

I run a magazine index of covering Christianity and music [[cmnexus.org](#)]. Our content runs the gamut from the Jesus music era until today. We cover mags like CCM, HM, Harvest Rock Syndicate, when we can dig them up.

Daniel Billings  
Editor, [cmnexus.org](#)

P.S. Issue three seems to be unavailable.

*(CM Nexus great site with a ton of info to dig through. Check it out when you get a chance.)*

*Have any other questions, comments, theological musings, etc? We would love to hear them – come be our friend on FaceBook or comment on our blog. We also do that Twitter thing occasionally.*





**Starflyer 59**

After a very successful Kickstarter campaign, SF59 have entered the studio to record their next album. They have also started a websote to sell vintage T-shirts and extra merchandise. Check it all out at their recently re-vamped website [sf59.com](http://sf59.com)

**Lust Control**

Lust Control also had a successful fund raiser to record their next album for Rottweiler Records. No details yet, but words like vinyl have been thrown around.

**The Choir**

Since our last issue, The Choir's new album *The Loudest Sound Ever Heard* has been released to rave reviews. See the review in this issue. Or go to [thechoir.net](http://thechoir.net) and grab your own copy. While there, you can also check out the re-issue of *Chase the Kangaroo*, complete with bonus commentary disc.

**SLIDE**

Also out since last issue is SLIDE's debut CD *Auto Tune Massacre*. See the interview and review in this issue, or head over to [slidemusicgroup.com](http://slidemusicgroup.com) to get your own copy. You will be glad you did.

**The 77s**

The 77s have been busy recently, re-issuing deluxe versions of *Sticks and Stones* as well as *Echoes of Faith*. See their website (77s.com) for details on all 8 discs that have been re-issued recently, or also check out the online exclusive interview with Mike Roe:

[downthelinezine.com/mike-roe-sticks-and-stones/](http://downthelinezine.com/mike-roe-sticks-and-stones/)

**Government Hate Mail**

Government Hate Mail is a new punk-ish band featuring former members of Crux, Empty tomb, and The Clergy and their sons. You can pre-order their limited edition EP from Veritas Vinyl now – but once it is gone, it is gone. See a review in this issue. See their [Facebook page](#) for all of the details.

**Lithium Saints**

A [Facebook page](#) for the Lithium Saints has popped up recently with this statement: "Lithium Saints - veteran alternative Christian rockers Sim Wilson of Undercover, Jesse Sprinkle of Poor Old Lu and Todd Olsen of The Waiting. Artwork by Chris Taylor of Love Coma." A video featuring Sim Wilson recording vocals is also up, along with a link to a BandCamp site (currently empty)... so I guess we can expect songs soon? Sounds cool.

**The Last Year For Cornerstone**

If you haven't heard the sad news, this was the last year for the annual Cornerstone Music Festival. Many of the concerts from this year are posted on YouTube.

**Bill Mallonee**

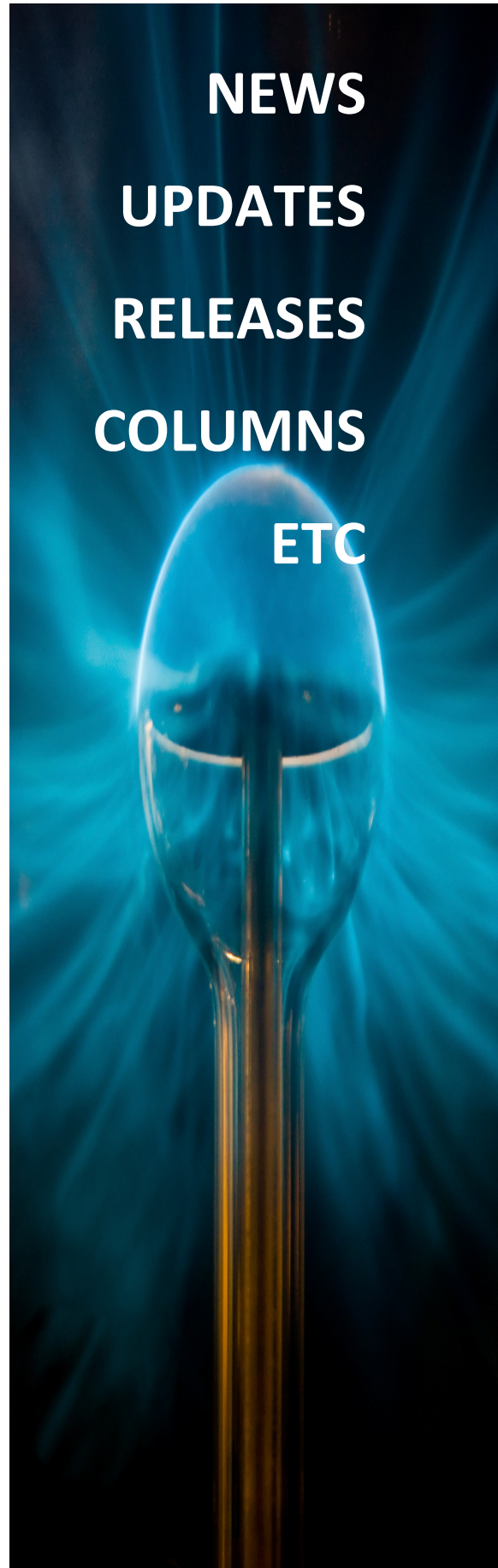
Bill is hard at work on his next full length album *Amber Waves*. Bill's last album *The Power & The Glory* was more of a rock album, but this 14 song album will likely take on a more acoustic-driven / folk-rock / country-alternative sort of feel. Rough mixes of various songs for the project are occasionally posted on Bill's BandCamp page. Keep an eye on [volsounds.com](http://volsounds.com) for details or to donate to the project.

**Cephas Hour Radio Show**

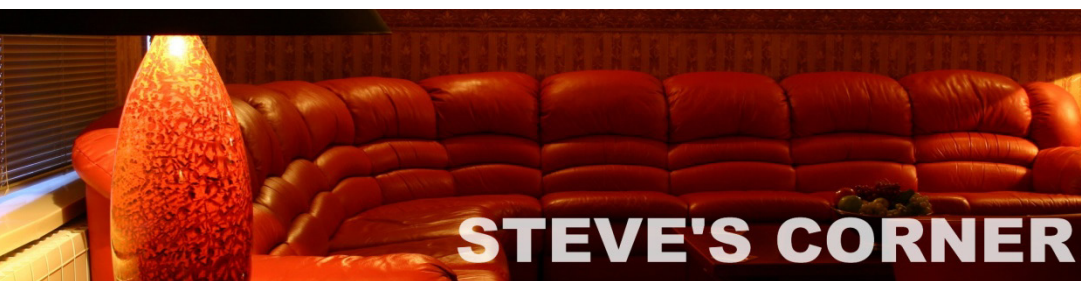
Jerry Wilson, author of [First and Forgotten](#), has recently started an internet radio broadcast that will probably interest readers of DTL: "Every Sunday at 11 AM Eastern, tune in to BlackLight Radio to hear the best in Christian rock and pop from the 1980s, with an occasional nod to the 1970s and 1990s. If you grew up on Phil Keaggy, The 77s, Undercover, Crumbächer, Steve Taylor, The Choir, Altar Boys and so many more wonderful artists and bands that were the soundtrack to our lives, rejoice! We'll be bringing you all these and more every week!" Details and archives can be found at the official website:

[goldfishandclowns.com/cephashour/](http://goldfishandclowns.com/cephashour/)

# NEWS UPDATES RELEASES COLUMNS ETC







I wanted to talk a minute about Michael Knott's artwork, and also a new thing he is doing as he branches out artistically. Most of you guys probably know that Michael has painted for as long as he has been making music. Did you know that his paintings are not only super cool, but they are very affordable as well? Purchasing an original Gerard piece is a great way to own some nice art, and a great way to support Michael's work.

Michael is branching out now with his paintings and he is collaborating with Brian Healy on new pieces! That's right, Knott and Healy in the saddle together and working together artistically...just think of all the cool stuff that could come from this pair together! I have included a picture of one of Michael's latest pieces, as well as one of the Knott/Healy pieces, both are pieces that I am super stoked to have in my collection. To get details on the art and how to purchase paintings, email [gerardartwork@yahoo.com](mailto:gerardartwork@yahoo.com). You can check out Brian and Michael's Facebook page to see the latest pieces.

I also asked for Brian's permission to update our readers on his health. Many of you know that Brian has undergone some serious surgery as he has been dealing with what was diagnosed as Adult Onset Hydrocephalus. You can read more about it here [www.aans.org](http://www.aans.org). He has undergone brain surgery after dealing with some serious and scary symptoms too numerous to list here. The good news is that he is on the mend and sounds better than ever! Brian has gone from being in a wheelchair, to now walking without a cane. He thanks everyone for their prayers and their well wishes, and while he is not back up to being on Facebook and causing other trouble, we will be hearing from him again very soon...keep your ears to the ground!



Gerard original title "Non Medical Detox"



Gerard/Healy original title "Jesus, Hold Me Closer"

### Veil of Ashes

In preparation for the upcoming release of *Eternal Teenage Angst*, Veil of Ashes has launched an official website at [veilofashes.com](http://veilofashes.com). You can find some great information on the site (Gene Simmons was a fan? Wow.) as well as blog for "Rants & Raves" and other information. You can also see a preview of the artwork for the new album by Jimmy Arceneaux (although people that follow VoA on Facebook saw it a long time ago :).

### Scaterd Few

Vinyl Remains and Veritas Vinyl have teamed up to release the classic *Sin Disease* album on vinyl. Right now, the only details that have been released are that it will be re-mastered and the release date is Fall 2012. Watch the [Scaterd Few Facebook page](#) for more details. Now if we can just get a box set of all *Jawboneofanass* recording sessions and the complete Terry Taylor produced demo :)

### The Waiting

The Waiting had a successful [Kickstarter campaign](#) to fund their upcoming album *Mysteriet*. Chris Taylor of Love Coma fame is working on the album art. The band has also made their independent debut release *Tillbury Town* available on their official [Bandcamp page](#). Oh, and don't forget that Todd Olsen (co-founder of The Waiting) has a solo project under the moniker of Oats called [a tear and a sneer](#).

### Michelle Thompson of The Wayside

Fans of The Wayside will be excited to hear that Michelle Thompson has started work on her first solo EP. In addition to writing her own songs, she has also enlisted co-writing help from Kate York, Julie Lee, Robin Ghosh, and Katy Bowser. But she needs your help to finance the recording, so her husband (who also happens to be in The Wayside with her) has set up a [Kickstarter campaign](#). There are some pretty cool rewards there, so check it out and help out any way you can.

### Saviour Machine

"Originally released in February of 2006, the four volume Rarities/Revelations was a Limited Signature Edition (500 copies) set. Those copies are long gone, and now sell for exorbitant prices when showing up in collectible auctions. Each volume of this set chronicles choice cuts of demo, live, or alternate recordings from one of four eras of band life. The tracks were compiled and edited by Adam Pedersen and the voice of Saviour Machine, Eric Clayton who searched relentlessly through their own personal archives of rare Saviour Machine material. Other tracks were culled from the collections of numerous, avid Saviour Machine fans who also shared the desire to have a comprehensive collection of the best of rare and exclusive Saviour Machine material. The result is four Discs of five hours of music. The 2012 releases on Retroactive Records have each Disc / Volume packaged in its own 6 panel digipak with liner notes, and each Disc / Volume is sold individually. It's worth noting that the Rarities / Revelations set is dedicated to one of the most loyal fans ever, Peter Kompanje (1978-2005), who amassed one of the most extensive collections of Saviour Machine rarities on earth. Days before his passing, Eric Clayton spent time with Peter, who openly shared his deep affinity and affection for these bootlegs and rarities. One of Peter's greatest wishes was for all the Saviour Machine faithful to hear this unique material that had given him so much joy, encouragement, and strength! Four individual releases; each with 80 minutes of music; each wearing the passion and inspiration that makes Saviour Machine great. This collection is unique – much like the band – the music is dark, progressive, gothic, rock and metal – but yet still manages to defy description and comparison. The grandfathers of gothic music have done it again! Get all four Volumes of Rarities/Revelations to complete your collection!"

You can get each CD at Amazon.



A gay man was walking from his house to the neighborhood grocery store, when he was attacked by a group of thugs. They took his clothes and possessions, beat him and went away... leaving him half dead. A preacher happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw that the man was gay, passed by on the other side. A good Christian Mom saw him also and decided to create a movement to boycott the street that let a gay man walk down it. But a homeless man came to where the man was and felt sorry for him. He bandaged his wounds, even putting on some rubbing alcohol he had been saving. Then he put the gay man in his own shopping cart and rolled him to a hotel and took care of him. The next day he took out all the money he had and gave it to the hotel owner. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return from begging for more money, I will reimburse you for any extra you may have to spend."

Which of these three do you think was a good Christian to the gay man who fell into the hands of thugs?

The world is full of thugs that want to beat up on all kinds of people – maybe not always physically, but definitely emotionally and socially. Do we want to join the thugs just to get to the chance to "be right", or do we want to be known for our mercy and compassion?

At one point in history, an expert of religious law was told a story like this one and asked who was the good person in the story.

The expert in religious law replied "The one who had mercy."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Are we bandaging wounds, or causing more?

*(this is an excerpt of a blog post called "They Shall Know We Are Christians By Our Political Pressure Moves." You can read the rest of this post and all of my other random musings at my Ecclesia Extraneus blog:*

<http://ecclesiaextraneus.wordpress.com>)





# STEVE SCOTT

AN EMOTIONAL TOURIST

INTERVIEW BY STEVE RUFF





When I was interviewing Jimmy A. in the last issue, he brought up Steve Scott and said something really funny like Scott was the “Yoda of the Sacramento scene.” It was something along those lines, but it was a humorous assessment that was filled with respect and obvious affection for Steve Scott. Jimmy A. went on to compare Steve to Tom Waits (which I thought was a huge compliment) and talk about how talented he was. It got me thinking that Scott would be a great choice for a cover story. I had recently purchased Scott’s latest release *Emotional Tourist* which was a compilation and a retrospective covering a vast and unique career. Plus, I have always been fascinated by his *The Butterfly Effect* album which was released on Blonde Vinyl records years ago. There are those memories I have cemented in my mind like the first time I heard “No Memory of You”, which is a powerful spoken word track that feels like it starts at the end and ends at the beginning. It was a poetic tale that reels the listener in and hooks us with a story that is as moving as it is interesting in that I could feel myself transported to another place...a place where I felt empathetic with the object of his story.

I remember when I first found out that Steve was in the 77’s prior to Mike Roe, that was through a couple of discs called *No Sense of History* and *Shirley, Goodness and Misery* on Alternative Records. Those were some of the fun memories that are still etched in my mind. Steve Scott is a true artist; he creates visual art, spoken word, poetry, music and combines them all in unique ways to tell a story, to relate emotion and to give meaning to the world around us. He is uniquely one of a kind!

**Can you give us the rundown with a bit of history about yourself? How did you get connected in the early days of the music scene, and where did you meet Randy Layton, Mike Roe and Jimmy Abegg?**

I’m British. I came to California because during my last year at art school I went to a Randy Stonehill concert at a nearby local church (this is in the early 1970s. Randy, and sometimes Larry Norman, was spending blocks of time in UK at this point). I met Randy and he heard some of my songs. Stonehill made a cassette for Larry Norman to hear and out of this came a mid-70’s Solid Rock record deal, and so I moved to Southern California. When things began to unravel a bit there in the late 1970s I moved to Sacramento. I had begun to build a working relationship with a church (Warehouse Christian Ministries) that had a declared interest in the arts.

It was here, in the early 1980s that Exit Records was born.... and I recorded with them along with 77s, Vector and Charlie Peacock among others. I also pursued my wider interests in the arts at this time. Jim Abegg was already part of the Warehouse ministries art and music scene when I got there.

He was part of a band called Panacea. Mike Roe came in a little bit later from the San Jose area (I believe), as did Steve Griffith. I did not meet Randy Layton until much later in the late 1980’s I think.... after Exit Records had begun to wind down.

**What is your profession right now? If I remember correctly Jimmy A. told me you were a pastor. What church and where?**

I’m an associate staff member with Warehouse Christian ministries. I also do some part time adjunct teaching through a local branch of Western Seminary.

**My introduction to you was *The Butterfly Effect*; it came out when I was 18 and blew me away. It was my introduction to your art and your craft. How did you get connected to Blonde Vinyl records and Michael Knott?**

Part of what I did, and still do, is going out and give talks/performances based in my experiences in the arts. Back in 1990/1991 I did a few days as a visiting artist at Biola in Southern California. It was out of my Biola connections at the time that I got introduced to people working with Blonde Vinyl, Chris Rumbaugh and Ken Bower among others, and eventually Michael Knott.

**Can you give me a history and explanation of the art movements of the last two centuries? (I was told to ask you for a detailed explanation on this question as well.)**

Way too vast to sum up. I think you can divide into Modernism and pursuit of truth, be it truth to materials, truth to the essence of art (the monochrome canvas), truth to the uncensored unconscious mind (surrealism to abstract expressionism and beyond), or the truth of the disintegrating social conditions of the time (expressionism, realism and, in a different way, Dada). Art in pursuit of Truth.

Post Modernism = abandoning the quest for a singular ‘truth’ as a biased enterprise rooted in power plays and untested (or untestable) presuppositions. Multiple ‘truths’ glimpsed in or through the free play of signs, symbols, signifiers and systems, irony, pastiche, collage/montage, mixed media, no media, concept, a return to imagery (but ironically) a sort of digitally connected ‘floating world.’ After Postmodernism (reckoned by some as the death rattle of modernism...?) is Alter-modernity on one hand that embraces (it seems) process, liquidity, precariousness, contingency, nomad-ism, rootless-ness.....or Meta-modernism that (among other things) pursues sincerity in an age of irony or post irony.

This hardly does justice to a very complex series of developments, and I must keep stressing I know how

superficial this is and full of lame generalizations. This is just the late 19th thru to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Maybe you could say it is a perennial tug of war between those who wish to preserve truth (the Classical) versus those that want to discover it (the romantics). That too is a horrendous cartoon generalization. I'd sooner much sooner provide a reading list or something.

**What is "Run with the Fire" and what exactly are you doing in helping to launch that?**

It is an international art exhibit dreamed up and curated by three organizations. My organization is called CANA (Christian Artists Networking Association) and two UK based organizations, Commission4Mission and Veritasse. This exhibit combines virtual images of art from different parts of the world on a DVD package with a 'real' art exhibit of local artists. It is being installed in galleries, churches and community centers in different parts of the UK and beyond, with the virtual art on DVD and monitor/screen and the other art on the walls around it. I chose the UK because it is Olympic year, and one of the central themes of 'Run with the fire' is the concept of running with the flame of inspiration or an idea.

Much of this art that has been made is the product of one creative person passing on an idea to another, who turns it into an art image. I personally was inspired by my own attempts to put together a 'virtual' exhibit in time for the Olympics in Beijing in 2008, and that exhibit had its own roots in conversations I was having with sculptors and artists on the island of Bali in 2005 during one of our CANA conferences.

**With this exhibit being in the UK, is there anything similar here in the States?**

US interest in 'Run with the fire' has started to pick up. There's also been inquiries from places as exotic as Singapore and Finland, and last time I checked there was an arts group in Bulgaria (one of their artists is part of the exhibit) seriously thinking about mounting a show. It is really just beginning to take off, with most of solid commitment and interest coming from different parts of the UK.

However anyone wishing to learn more about the project and maybe considering getting involved in some way (doesn't matter where you live!!) can get in touch with:

[www.veritasse.co.uk/run-with-the-fire/](http://www.veritasse.co.uk/run-with-the-fire/)

Here's some other links that will provide even more background info.

[runwiththefire.blogspot.com/2011/11/run-with-fire.html](http://runwiththefire.blogspot.com/2011/11/run-with-fire.html)  
[www.artway.eu/artway.asp?id=225&lang=en&action=show&type=current](http://www.artway.eu/artway.asp?id=225&lang=en&action=show&type=current)  
[www.chelmsford.anglican.org/run-with-fire.html](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/run-with-fire.html)

**Can you tell me about your recent gallery shows and what type of art that you have been showing and working on? In addition can you explain the creation process for your visual art and how that transpires?**

I'm initially using the snapshots from my Asian and European travels; scanning them, editing them, printing them onto different kinds of paper, and in some cases adding hand coloring and collaging other elements. I'm then reframing them in frames and boxes found in thrift stores. That's a very simple basic description of the kind of work I'm doing, and there's been a couple of local gallery shows so far. In some ways it is similar to the sound loops and the songwriting, also similar to the 'Boundaries' multivolume I described. All these aspects of work, from subject to approach and to method, feed off one another. In this case I'm keying off the visual and perhaps storytelling combinations that occur when you combine and recombine images in this way and then add a further dimension or layer of possible reference with the frame. Its perhaps a bit glib to say it's all about retrieval and renewal, but that is one layer of what interests me in working like this.....especially when I (and you) can reach back beyond the frame, the working method and get to the idea of retrieval and renewal in the 'subject matter',( travel, children, etc) itself.

Right now I'm building collages and mixed media visual art (as well as sound loops, poems and songs). I've also just begun using some of these images in PowerPoint as part of a narrative/performance format. I'm inspired, somewhat imperfectly, by the presentation format of Pecha Kucha (20 slides, optimally 20 seconds per slide...in some cases auto timed so you have to keep moving). I'm not hardcore purist on times, and I'm not on a timer yet, but I do have images and narrative. I just got back from UK/London gallery opening of Run with the Fire, and as well as reading poetry at the launch, I did a couple of talks one narrating where Run with the Fire came from, and then another talk/with slides on how some of my ideas (about art and so on)are emerging and changing.

**As we progress into a new century and you have had the ability to be involved for so many years in the music and art scene, do you see the "church" has become more accepting of artists and creativity as they express it, or do you see that it is still one of the 'dead horses' that continue to be beaten rather than embraced?**

It really is a mixed bag. There's a lot more acceptance and openness to the arts in many places/churches these days.



What we all need to work on together is increasing the depth and the quality of the art. This might involve a bit of stretching, learning, risk taking and hard work.

**Do you approach songwriting in the same way you do your poetry? I guess what I am asking is what comes first, do you write music and look for a lyrical 'match', or do the poems become lyrics and then the music comes along later? Can you describe that process a bit?**

For me, when writing a song, the music comes first a lot of times. I don't recall writing a set of lyrics and then trying to fit them to a chord sequence. This is because so much of my spoken word work really concentrates on the language and the poetry, and then finding or creating a sound loop sequence to go behind it. Actual 'songwriting' (which I regard as a bit separate) goes at things differently. I might try and write a 'mood' or at least from a mood that has been suggested to me by prior chord patterns or even instrumental combinations in sequence. I might work on the lyrics once they are 'sketched', but often times the initial 'sketch' emerges from a musical idea or sequence.

As I say my poetry/loops work is different (with songwriting... its more vernacular/conversational.... except for the end rhyme) with poetry over backing tracks, the language, the tone, the pauses, the attitude, the assumed 'voice' is much more front and center. Take away the loops and just read poetry, as I just did at the London gallery launch for 'Run with the Fire'; with the pressure on words, stance, voice, etc. doing all the work is amazing.

**How did the idea for *Emotional Tourist* come about, and with a career as full as yours, how did you decide which tracks to include?**

Let's go back to the origins of the concept for me. The term 'Emotional Tourist' surfaced in an interview with David Bowie around the time of his album *Lodger*, which I think was late 70s, but I didn't stumble over the phrase until early 80s when I was in UK for a short while. At the time the term was used negatively (by the interviewer) to suggest a superficial using of different cultural and ethnic flavors, or just traveling along the surface of different cultures. I especially liked that image/metaphor after *Love in the Western World*, and so I took it and built a song around it drawing upon some my own travel experiences in India and Germany for the imagery.

I also began to write/build a huge sprawling multivolume book called 'The Boundaries' that collaged poetry/prose and my travel journals from all over the world (Russia, India, Bali and elsewhere...), and some of that work has been featured on my spoken word albums as well as different volumes of the book put out by small presses here and there. Actually both the song/concept 'Emotional Tourist'

and the approach/work of 'The Boundaries' can be seen in a kinder light in our liquid, globally connected 21st Century World. We're all emotional tourists now... nomads, surfers... or perhaps everything is a giant loop!!

OK, talking now, about the current album.....The retrospective album choices were made with a bit of input from both the record label (Arena rock) and the executive producer. The plan was to hit the high spots in the collected works, and come up with something true to the journey I'm on (so to speak) but also keep it user friendly and engaging in terms of songs, poems and music.

**How has *Emotional Tourist* been received?**

Everything I've read so far has been very enthusiastic and positive.

**Are you a reader? What are some books that you have read recently that you would recommend, and what are some of your favorite books and authors?**

I read a lot across a wide spectrum. What I list here is just a surface smattering from what I can recall off the cuff... I have always read a lot of poetry, ranging from Basil Bunting to Tomas Tranströmer; Denise Levertov is good as well as a great poet and good model for those looking to put their faith explorations into words.

I enjoy art criticism books with everything from the sadly neglected Peter Fuller to Nicolas Bourriaud via Thomas McEvilley, and many more. I am especially interested in art theorists and critics writing from a majority world context/perspective (as well as those writing about it!).

As far as theologians and Biblical books, I've had my eyes opened up by reading people like Thomas F. Torrance, Kenneth E. Bailey, Leslie Newbigg and Jurgen Moltmann. I could go on and on, I read a lot of fiction from the traditional to experimental including the 'not quite fiction' books about London by Iain Sinclair, and I enjoy Japanese author Shusaku Endo.

**What are you working on presently?**

I am just finishing up another album's worth of material featuring poems and sound loops about Russia, Cambodia and other parts of Asia at one level. At another level it's about art, life and spirit.

**If you are interested in Steve's art and CD's, you can drop him an email with this as the subject:**

[thescotts4@sbcglobal.net](mailto:thescotts4@sbcglobal.net)

**Subject: Steve, I want to sell/talkabout/exhibit your art,**



have you do a performance/ reading/ powerpoint talk (whichever is appropriate) or buy a CD or two.....

If you have never listened to Steve Scott's work, I would highly recommend his latest release *Emotional Tourist* which will give you a great perspective on his vast body of work. I also think *The Butterfly Effect* is some of the most powerful spoken word conveyed against a backdrop of beautifully mesmerizing loops and sequences.







A lot has happened in the SLIDE camp since we last interviewed them in Issue #3. Not only do they now have an album out, but also new band members and some live shows to top it all off. Oh, and maybe a bit of that controversy they are known to have from time to time. So let's catch up with what has been going on and what the future holds...

**So, first off – what are your feelings on the CD? How does it feel to get it out in the wild?**

We are very proud of *Auto Tune Massacre*. We feel like it was worth the amount of time & effort we put into it. Whenever you set out to write and record an album you aren't always guaranteed you will be happy with the end result. We feel we got the packaging, arrangements and tracking done right and that our mix engineer, Billy Stevens, was able to put the final touches on the album in a way that gave us the edge we were looking for. We feel the music is current and the message is relevant to what is going on in the world today. In our minds that is a winning combination. It feels great to finally have the product out there and in the hands of the public.

**There was a long period of time between the initial announcement of the new album and the actual release date. Was that due to busy lives or was there another reason behind it?**

First, SLIDE went through some lineup changes. Halfway through recording the album James Preston and Mike Baker decided to bring a new guitar player on board to help re-write the songs to be more guitar driven and then decided to add an actual bass player (instead of using synth driven bass). They wanted to bring someone in who could not only play their instrument well, but also had the right temperament and could work well in the context of a four piece band. Chris Berry was the first to come on board to help with guitar and then later Jeff Lantry was added on bass. The other reason there was such a gap between the announcement and the release date was that we wanted to give ourselves enough time to make sure we were able to finish recording, mixing, pressing and preparing the CD for distribution before the release date hit. We have seen many artists over the years announce a release date and then have to keep moving it back - we didn't want to do that to our fans. And last, we wanted to be sure we were



ready to support the album by having a great live show ready to go.

**Some of the previously released songs had upgraded version on the album. Was that a conscious decision or natural progression?**

This was not a pre-planned part of the process. We spent a good deal of time and money recording and mastering those initial versions of the songs fully intending to release them as part of the final album. However, as we moved along in the writing and recording process we found that we wanted to move towards a more organic alternative rock sound and back away from the electronic realm. It was during this period that we brought Chris Berry on board for guitar and began reworking the songs to fit the harder edge model we were looking for. It just felt better to us. We also discovered that after we added Jeff Lantry on bass and began to rehearse the songs as a band that each song evolved and took on a new life of its own. Of course, this lead to re-recording the songs which took more time and so on ... a record company's budget nightmare for sure. Some listeners have asked us if we will ever release the "first versions" of the upgraded tracks in the future and the answer is yes, we will at some point.

**Any plans to do another promo video? Any chance we'll see an actual auto tune machine get massacred?**

We did put together a 7 ½ minute montage video to support the release of ATM. People can check it out on our website at [slidemusicgroup.com](http://slidemusicgroup.com). And, we just recently connected with a new video production company to film an all new concept video based on our song Political Zombie. Should be a lot of fun so stay tuned! We love your idea of massacring an auto-tune machine in the new video. You don't happen to have a sledge hammer we can borrow do you?

**I identified with Political Zombie, just because I get so tired of people blindly following what their "candidate" says without questioning. Was there a particular issue or event that inspired this song? Being based in California, do you think the "zombie-ism" is worse there than other places?**

Political Zombie was inspired by a collective body of events that have unfolded over the years (in the political arena). Our favorite line in the song sums up what this song really is about "Too many people try telling me what to think, If you gave a damn you'd teach me how to think". It's really a song that says its more important to become a critical thinker then it is to become a "sell out" to a particular political ideology. It also is a song that takes a stand against "group think" mentality, which is disturbingly becoming more acceptable in the world today. "Group

Think" is what Hitler tried to do with Germany and all the terrible things that occurred during the holocaust. Today, we see a modern version of "Group Think" taking place which is chipping away at our American freedoms. California tends to have its fair share of "Zombie-ism", just because our state is so divided here in terms of liberal and conservative views. But, most would probably agree, the nation as a whole is currently divided. Not a good place to be at all. As Americans, we need to be more united then divided.

**How did you connect with people like Mary McDonough and Mdavisto?**

In 2009 when we began working on ideas for our first video (Dime Store Queer) the idea came up to include a cameo if possible. James has always been a big fan of the classic TV show *The Walton's* so he set out to try and connect with Mary McDonough (who played Erin Walton in the series for all 9 seasons). He discovered that she lived locally to him in Orange County, CA. Mary loved the concept of an anti-bullying video and felt it would be very educational and graciously agreed to do a cameo for us. Since that time, James and Mary have become good friends and continue to stay in contact. Mary even recently attended our release party for Auto Tune Massacre. It was great to have her be a part of both the video and the release party. James connected with Mdavisto after hearing several remixes from his website. Being that he lives in South Africa we felt he would bring a unique, yet authentic, cultural perspective to his remixes for us. Mdavisto agreed to review some of our tracks and consider taking on the project (the first of which was a remix of January). After hearing our music he agreed to take on the project and the rest is history. We are very happy with his work and ended up having him remix three of our songs for the CD. He was wonderful to work with on so many levels. We would definitely work with him again in a heartbeat.

**"Dime Store Queer" seemed to come out right before some big stories involving bullying. Have you had any feedback from bullying victims on that song?**

The timing was really lucky on that one. The song is based on a true story and it just seemed like the right time to tell it. It also seems to resonate with everyone who hears it. So, naturally we thought it would be the right song for us to feature in a concept video form. We have had comments from LGBT anti-bullying organizations and they have expressed gratitude for tackling this tough issue. We have also sent the video out to people like Ellen to review when she was featuring anti-bullying music videos. We are hoping that many people will get the message of hope and triumph we built into both the song and the video.

**Since some people can make knee-jerk reactions based on**

**song titles alone, was there any concern that “Dime Store Queer” might actually be seen as an anti-gay song?**

We knew from the very beginning that the title might come across as controversial but that is not why the song title bears that name. The song title actually holds a very special meaning and we felt it would be worth the risk to use it. We also understood that the word “Queer” may seem condescending to some but we hoped people would take time to listen to the song or watch the video and discover the powerful message behind the song title. Lyrically the song is quite clear that it is about someone regaining their strength and letting go of the victim role. It is about someone who has to exorcise the demons of his past, boldly embrace who he is and learn to be okay with it. At some point we must all move on and learn to stand up, be strong and show others what we are made of. We are hoping that no matter if someone is gay, Goth or a Jesus freak they will find that they don’t have to wait until later in life to accept that being different from everyone else is okay. Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. School yard bullies, political bullies, academic bullies, and even religious ones all have one thing in common; they are not comfortable in their own skin either. But the difference is that they have to pick on others they see as vulnerable to make themselves feel better. Bullies do what they do because they feel powerless themselves, and by degrading others, they begin to feel a false sense of power. We have had more than one person contact us saying that the title did scare them at first, but after listening to it they felt compelled to share their story with us. Further proof that neither SLIDE nor the song is being perceived as anti-gay is that we have just been selected to play the main stage at the 2012 San Diego Gay Pride Festival this July! If one of the biggest pride festivals around doesn’t think the song title is offensive or anti-gay than that really must be saying something.

**What are ways that different parts of society – from schools and churches to individuals and parents – can do something about bullying? Sometimes it just seemed so ingrained that it is part of “growing up”.**

Well we think that a lot is being done to educate kids and adults right now about the dangers of bullying. From the newly released movie “Bully” to movements like “Itgetsbetter.org” the anti-bully movement is in full swing. Schools are teaching anti-bullying curriculum, holding special assemblies and events, and new anti-bully laws are being passed as this very moment. Effectiveness of all this is really all about educating people about the effects of bullying and the negative consequences of doing nothing about it. We may not be able to change the bully’s mind but we can at least discourage the behavior or stop it all together by showing there are now consequences for such actions. There is no doubt that life is tough and is rarely ‘fare’ and yes, bullying has been a part of growing up in the past. But all that evil needs to succeed is for good people to do nothing about it.

**So anyone listening to ATM would soon realize that you are not fans of some of the things that happen on Facebook. Do you think there is any good to modern technology like texting and social media, or is all of it causing more damage than good?**

We are certainly not against texting and social media. SLIDE has its own website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. It is all about balance. Like everything else when things go to the extreme, and you depend too much on them, they can lead to unhealthy behaviors. Songs like faceless and ATM are addressing our waning ability as a society to communicate honestly and effectively with each other. Our digital devices are replacing real human relationships and interactions. Tactile stimulation is being replaced by digital manipulation. We are becoming so distracted our ability to pay attention and focus has been diminished. People cowering behind digital walls instead of engaging in healthy discussion and confrontation with one another. The concept of one on one relationship is being chipped away. Things that make us grow are being short circuited. So no, we don’t hate Facebook and SLIDE is not the band version of a modern day Luddite.

**What are your thoughts on the current day music industry? Is it killing itself, changing, or just being taken over by the digital world?**

Things are changing for sure and anyone that is not willing to change with the times will get left behind in the dust. The music industry may not kill itself but it has been severely crippled. There is no doubt that the digital age has been a double-edged sword for the music business while as a music consumer it has been all on the upside. The challenge the music industry (and we as artists) face in this new business model is two-fold. The first is that almost anyone can record a CD now and put it out there to the world. This causes the market to be oversaturated and cheapens the product as a whole. The second part is





because digital music is so easy to copy and redistribute it has sucked the money (and subsequently the life) out of the music business to the point that it is almost impossible to find a label willing to take a chance on new acts. Thus the birth of the Indy movement. Record companies are forced to locate only the acts they know they can market and sell to the masses. This dilemma has even crossed over into radio play where you find only large broadcast companies making deals with labels and limiting air play to prearranged play lists only. On the positive side of the digital age bands can get airplay on streaming radio stations over the internet and hope to get discovered and are able to market their music to anyone in the world who is willing to listen with very little investment of their own.

**How are the live shows turning out? How does the crowd react to the material?**

So far we are pretty happy with the feedback we are receiving. We are certainly in the process of , learning what works and making adjustments as needed. The crowd reaction has been very supportive so far and we feel we are on the right path. It is always nice to get instant feedback from the crowds as we learn which songs end up resonating with them the most.

**Did releasing the singles before the album help in any way (raising funds, growing fan base, etc.)? Would you recommend this route to other bands?**

First, releasing the tracks helped us out by being able to get feedback on the direction we were going. This helped us in making our decision to go more organic instead of the electronic route. It also helped us mature our song writing skills. It did help us grow our fan base and helped us to find Chris and Jeff, who both became interested in the band by hearing these early release versions of the tracks. We think that bands should to do whatever works best for them. This just happened to work for us.

**Now that the album is out, are there any thoughts of a follow-up? What does the future hold for SLIDE?**

Absolutely. We have already begun writing for a 2<sup>nd</sup> album and even have a tentative title. However, we are keeping that secret for now since things are ever changing and evolving in the world of SLIDE. In the near future we plan on playing shows and festivals to support the release of ATM

and to build our fan base. SLIDE is willing to play almost anywhere we are invited. Whether it be a Gay Pride Festival, a Hollywood Club, Cornerstone or Creation Festival, we do not segregate ourselves from anyone. We will be filming the concept video for "Political Zombie" in the very near future. We will also start posting videos of our live shows and special podcasts very soon. Stay Tuned!

**You mention not discriminating between different groups, including some different Christian groups like Jesus freaks. I am wondering - have you had any response from Christian fans of your music? I know there is a spiritual dimension to SLIDE's lyrics, but not as blatantly obvious as some Christians like. Have you had any feedback on that side of your music?**

We have had responses from Christian fans. Some think SLIDE are the devils spawn, and others have applauded our current direction. We realize SLIDE isn't for everyone. We can tell you SLIDE dearly holds a lot of spiritual values and will continue to do so. Just not in the way people expect us too. We believe in playing to the masses, not for just one body of people. Additionally, SLIDE is made up of 4 people, some who are believers, and others who are not. All four of us have a deep respect and love for each other, regardless of where they have been, or where they are headed (aka: unconditional love). However, we realize answering this question may have self-destructed our chances of playing Cornerstone or Creation Festival ever again!! But, we believe honesty is the best policy to live by, so there you have it. Wait,,, did someone just de-friend/de-fan us on our Facebook page because of the way we answered? (There's a song on our album about that too called "Faceless")

[slidemusicgroup.com](http://slidemusicgroup.com)



# PING

## Jeff Elbel and a cast of uncompromising musicians complete their finest work.

Interview by Steve Ruff

Ever have one of those feelings that nag at you and every time it comes to mind you just kind of shrink back and wonder what the heck your problem is? That's the feeling each time I thought of Jeff Elbel and his band Ping. Why? Because I should have interviewed this guy a long time ago and I don't have a good reason as to why I didn't. I am a big fan of Ping, the *Peanut Gallery* EP absolutely blew me away when I first heard it. Elbel & company have done it once again with what I would consider to be their best work yet! The band recently completed *Gallery*, a full length record full of hoots, howls, and rollicking Americana rock n roll. It is a stellar recording that starts and never lets down! Catching up with Jeff was cool, it was way past time to talk to the guy and hopefully there will be more stories to share in the near future! (As a side note, I'm pretty sure the new track "I Forget" could be the story of my life.) Last of all, Jeff is also a great writer, and you can catch his reviews in the magazine *The Big Takeover* which should be on your local bookstore shelf. I included the *Gallery* bio that Jeff wrote at the end of this interview because it sums up the album much better than I ever could.

**For those who might not be familiar with you and your work, can you give a history of Ping and how the band came to be?**

Ping began back in 1997, while I was still playing with Sunny Day Roses in Los Angeles. Roses had developed a sound that relied upon female lead vocal and fused pop, world music and jazz influences. It was a really great bunch of players and a super tight band, but I was itching to try something on the side that was more rock and roll. My friends Nick Amoroso and Clint Davidson were in cool pop bands, too, but they loved heavy stuff like King's X and Led Zeppelin. I knew that developing songs with those guys could get the walls shaking. It was great fun working with them, and we developed the material for the *Meet Your Maker* concept album. That project remains unfinished, but I still chip away at it. The first Ping record was a big change from that sound. *No Outlet* does contain five of the *Meet Your Maker* songs, but they're all acoustic.

**When did you form Marathon records and do you have an available list of the bands that you have worked with and the bands that have appeared on the label?**

Marathon Records began in 1992 when we were working on the first Farewell to Juliet album, *Echoes of Laughter*. We did a lot of work with another great indie band from Champaign, IL called Soulstice. Their singer would join us for King's X covers, their guitar player introduced me to Phish and Trip Shakespeare, and their bassist played violin on our *Loyal to You* live album. Soulstice were working on a record at the same time as us. I figured that Marathon could be a vehicle to distribute our records and help us present them in a professional manner. Marathon has worked directly with Able Cain, Mumble, King Never, Andrew Wesley, the Hopescope, John & Kim, and Sunny Day Roses. We distributed records for the Electric Revival, Battered Fish, Animator and The Return. I helped Michael Knott release four of his records, too, though it was ultimately in his best interests not to call them Marathon Records releases.

**Ping has an incredibly solid sound and is one of those bands that leaves me scratching my head wondering how come you're not super famous and on every magazine cover around. The music is really tight and the workmanship sets a high standard, have you shopped the band around to larger labels at all?**

First, thanks very much such a powerful compliment. I shopped Farewell to Juliet and Sunny Day Roses very aggressively throughout the 90s. Those bands were stable, working groups. I got very close with each, but no cigar. Over the decade, it really burned me out on music. At one point, I pretty much decided to quit.

I can remember the turning point, or at least what caused it. I heard a song by David Lowery called "Big Dipper," which he recorded with Cracker. I connected so deeply with that one song. It wasn't a single; it was just tucked away on "The Golden Age." It reminded me that you can make music just because you love it. It doesn't have to light up the nation. It can still be very cool, just lighting up your corner of the room. You can still pursue it to the highest musical standards, without expecting business success from it.

**Would I like to have a career in music? Yes. Will I allow frustration over that desire interfere with my fascination for music itself, ever again? No way.**

I will go absolutely anywhere to play a gig, but I don't have a regular band. Ping is a revolving cast of great friends who are excellent musicians. Different batches of us combine for different shows. I do a fair amount of solo sets, too. Without something stable that can tour profitably, there's not much point pitching labels anymore. If someone from a



label hears something in Ping they consider investment-worthy, I'm happy to talk. I think my energy is better spent trying to find opportunities for individual songs, though. If I can secure a few synch licenses for finished or instrumental Ping tracks in film projects and such, I'll be really pleased.

**There are like 11 or 12 players on this release... how did the record come together and how did you get people like Dan Dixon from Atlanta and Andrew Carter from California to play? Was the record done in a studio or were different parts done and sent back and forth via digital magic?**

Most of the recording was done at The Happy Club, which is my studio in Wheaton, IL. I also have a mobile rig, and that's what I took to California to record Andy. We did that in his apartment, and I'm telling you, we had that Fender Super Reverb amplifier cranked! We tried to start early and record while people were off at their jobs, but we finally got a complaint from the manager on the third day. John Bretzlaff has a good recording rig about an hour away at The Hive, so I tracked his guitar there in his natural habitat. Andrew Oliver tracked his drums here, but he recorded some percussion by himself back in Brooklyn. We're coast to coast! The only player I didn't record directly at all was Dan Dixon from Dropsonic. He's an excellent engineer and producer. After we talked about it, he tracked the solo for "Light it Up" himself in Atlanta. That solo is pure adrenalin, and I love it.

**This is such a great rock n roll record that you have just finished up, it's like *Peanut Gallery* ep times 11 which is hard to do, there's no filler here! How long did this take to complete from start to finish?**

All in, it took two and a half years. It was just the logistics of getting people together. When we were working, it went quickly. It has to be said that Maron Gaffron is the fastest of the bunch. She can really set 'em up and knock 'em down, she's a dynamite vocalist. I'm the slowpoke, but when it comes to recording vocals, no one has to put up with me but me. I engineer for myself.

**On a more personal level...married, kids, etc?**

My wife and I have been married for twenty-one years. We have a daughter going into eighth grade this fall. When she was four, she inspired the song "Engine of Destruction." On most days, she's still trying to live up to the title. She bugs me for driving lessons all the time. I think we should just accept our reality and get her a bulldozer license. Her younger sister is going into second grade. She's the one that looks exactly like I did at her age. It's like looking at old photos of me in a little pink Hello Kitty dress.



**What was your affiliation with Cornerstone Festival? My understanding was that you ran the Gallery Stage? Am I correct in that?**

I've been involved for many years, but it's definitely JPUSA's show. Those folks deserve all the credit for making it happen so faithfully for twenty-nine years. I'm honored that they've trusted me and allowed me to pitch in. I have been the afternoon stage manager on Gallery since the late 90s, I think. Glen Van Alkemade is the festival's official manager for the stage. He and I have swapped shifts occasionally, so I've gotten to handle some great evening sets, too. I'm really looking forward to Neal Morse, Iona and The Choir this year.

**What are your thoughts on the Fest closing down?**

Oh, I feel terrible about it. What in the world will I do next year for the Fourth of July? Cornerstone has been my annual oasis since 1992. I'm aware that it has become a tremendous financial burden for JPUSA. They've worked very hard to keep the gates open each summer, but economic circumstances have forced them to finally accept that it can't continue.

If I have a life story to tell in the end, Cornerstone will be elemental to telling it. Even though it has only been one

week a year, it has been a very intense week and a great source of community. Lasting friendships have been forged there, and now I'll have to accept that I probably won't see many of those people ever again.

It's probably also going to be the last time that I perform with the expanded version of Ping all at once, which includes nine people. The festival has been like a family reunion for the group, which now spans coast to coast, as I mentioned. I adore these people, and it'll be a bittersweet experience to gather them for one last rock and roll fling. We'll do our best to let people know we love them, and go out with a bang.

**I'm sure Ping will play the last Fest, will you be playing with any other bands as well?**

I'll be playing bass for Maron's band, which is an absolute joy. If I'm lucky, maybe I'll get to sing with Aradhna's small choir again. I did that a few years ago, and it was goose bumps the entire set. They blend traditional Indian styles and instrumentation with progressive pop. It's serene and breathtaking at the same time. There's also an outside possibility that I could play bass for a few songs during the Seventy-Sevens acoustic set, in Mark Harmon's absence. It's not something I'm counting on, and I wouldn't dare hold Roe to it, but if it happened that would be a sweet thing. I'll be there digging it no matter what.

**Below is the press release that comes with the new Gallery release. It is written so precisely that I wanted to share it directly.**

Jeff Elbel + Ping: *Gallery* CD  
Marathon Records (2012)

**Jeff Elbel** and company expand upon their love of rock and roll storytelling with their new *Gallery* album. Although the Ping cast has remained busy both together and apart, *Gallery* is the band's first full-length studio recording since 2005's *The Eleventh Hour Storybook*. *Gallery* contains eleven new Ping tracks, suitable for fans of all ages.

"I Can Change" describes a pair of familiar

characters who made good upon second chances in life, and finds the singer determined to make a similar u-turn. The blend of male/female vocals and the barnstorming rock and roll of **Stacey Krejci's** bass recall classic 70's rhythm and blues artists such as **Delaney and Bonnie**.

The anthemic roots-rock of "In a Place Where Shadows Grow" is delivered from the point of view of someone who has betrayed the trust of his closest friend, uncertain whether forgiveness is even on the table – primarily from himself. The presence of violinist **Matt Gaden** (**Photoside Café**) draws out familiar influences for Elbel, including **Camper Van Beethoven** and the **Jayhawks**.

"Your Wicked Mirror" has a bluesy swagger with a hint of **The Staples Singers**, featuring a knockout vocal performance by **Maron Gaffron**. The song's female protagonist is fed up with her no-account man, and pulls no punches while telling him so. **Mike Choby's** gospel organ sends **John Bretzlaff's** heroic guitar solo soaring heavenward.

**Dan Dixon** of Atlanta-based hard rockers **Dropsonic** drops the hammer with a blistering solo during rowdy rocker "Light it Up," while the core band keeps it mellow with the chime and jangle of "My Own Best Enemy." "Make Sure Your Eyes are Fine" captures the full-tilt energy of Ping's nine-piece concert lineup. "Time Enough at Last" tells the story of a man who got all he ever wanted and lived to regret it. The song is inspired by a famous episode of the *Twilight Zone* starring Burgess Meredith.

The spacious and moody vibe of "Comfort Me" houses a simple prayer for strength and support during trying times. The lush blend of sounds envelops the listener like a warm blanket, with **Ginger Gonzalez's** flute breezing sweetly over the top. **Andrew Carter's** slide guitar recalls the shimmering textures of **Daniel Lanois's** *Belladonna* EP, while **Andrew Oliver's** tom-toms pound like U2 at their most insistent.

<http://www.netads.com/music/marathon/ping/>







# THE PREDATORS

## Coming Roundabout After a 20 Year Break

Interview by Matt Crosslin

The Predators were a ground breaking Christian rock band that started in the late 1970's in England. After several releases, they called it a day in 1989. Mike Rimmer has a [great historical piece about the band](#) on the Cross Rhythms website. Recently, the band got back together and recorded a new album. We decided to catch up with them to see where they have been, what they are doing now, and where they are going.

**What has everyone been up to since the band called it a day in 1989?**

Fran Johnson (FJ): I am the owner of an electronics manufacturing company as well as having a multi-format recording mastering studio that is also involved in converting analogue media to digital; I am also involved in writing and co-writing music for other artists.

Kelvin Allwood (KA): I continued working in bands as guitarist. Initially I spent a year with Shiloh (Black Gospel Choir); then became involved in a Sheffield-based Christian Rock band RED ALERT for approx 8 yrs doing similar outreach work to the Preds (i.e. gigging in mixture of secular and church-based venues). Later, after a spell of playing guitar and drums in my home church, I was a founder member of OUTCRY an inter-denominational worship band which continues to work in churches and other (e.g prisons & festivals etc) more secular venues. My 2 year stint with CD4 immediately preceded the Preds reformation. CD4 is a registered charity which uses music as a means of bringing about HIV awareness. Gigs at Universities and other strategic venues organised as part of

major festivals etc (e.g World Aids Day) together with the production of 3 internationally distributed CD albums were used to propagate the message. This was part of my "Social Gospel" activities rather than as a direct means of evangelism.

Paul Truswell (PT): All Christian guitarists eventually become bass players in worship bands?!? Well that's what I ended up doing. In addition to the Sunday worship band I was in two groups 'Exalt' and then 'Oblivious' - reasonable stuff but far too safe and introverted in their outlook. Finally third group 'Clueless' (not literally!) came along, competently but unexcitingly doing covers from Free/Alright Now through to Behind these Hazel Eyes/Kelly Clarkson, Bon Jovi/Living on a Prayer etc. with much in-between. Workwise since 1989 - well in a nutshell; up until 1994 I worked in an Architect's office and thereafter I have run my own info technology support business, in partnership with my wife since 2002. At church, in addition to causing a few earth tremors on bass Sunday by Sunday, I have been involved in the youth outreach work on the housing estate where I live.

**What led to The Predators getting back together? How did that work out?**

FJ: This was the persistence of Gemma, Kev's daughter, who kept on our backs for about three years before we did anything about it. She and others felt that The Preds still had something to give, that they were still relevant through their music and message to the younger generations.

KA: There was a growing desire on my own part to be involved once more with the Preds and a one-off re-union re-ignited the old flame!

PT: Kevin's daughter Gemma emails the band on 12 June 2008... "Hope you're all OK. I believe you have heard that we want to get the old Predators team together to see if you want to do some rockin' again - in whatever way you all feel is best etc." No I hadn't heard! Following a meeting at New Life Church Tameside on June 26 of all The Preds (6 band members + road/management/production crew + wives and a few others; 20+ in all) and an email deluge, a reunion bash was organised for 11 September 2008. We met in Andy Rayner's work premises in Hazel Grove near Stockport amongst shelves of car wax, polishing cloths and rubber mats; Fran got a modest drum kit set up, Brian piled up a few keyboards and the rest of us just about managed to squeeze a few amps in, oh and we managed to find room for Kev and mic – just. Then we launched into: Your World, Jack, Love You To Death, Never Said A Word, Never Say Die, Plastic Surgeon, Stand Up and Be Counted, Sunday Boy, Wipe The Tears and Don't Burn That Cross; easy! Well let's just say we surprised ourselves... a great night was had by all and we left happy, buzzing and ears ringing, in an all too familiar way. It quickly became apparent however that despite blistering performances that evening from Brian Westhead and Andy Rayner that neither of them could see any future for themselves in a reunion going forward. We quickly therefore had to meet our first challenge – a new format for The Preds. So I took up the daunting challenge of taking over from Andy on bass (last time round I had been on lead guitar) and we started looking out for someone to replace Brian on keys, equally challenging and a role eventually taken on by Dan Reed – new blood at last!

**Getting back together led to recording a new album. How was that different this time, compared to past albums? What style of music were you aiming for with the new music?**

FJ: I think the music more reflects where we are now and also how we have evolved over the years, we have resisted the temptation to do a big production number on it.

KA: This is a difficult one to answer. Naturally we wished to widen our sphere of influence by tapping into the recorded as well as live market, but there was also a desire to see what we were capable of now that some of the original song writing contributors were no longer involved. Could we still deliver the goods? What would emerge? Although we were aware that musically, things had moved on a long way from the raw and edgy days of the 70's, I don't think that we deliberately set out to write in any particular style. We just wanted to be true to ourselves, as well as providing a powerful message that linked into the everyday experience of ordinary people.

PT: I am a relative late-comer to The Preds having joined as recently as 1987! ...apart from the obvious technical differences, certainly when it comes to reproduction and distribution (ie. digital formats via CD, Amazon, iTunes etc), and apart from the presence of four huge display screens and a very bare looking desk complete with keyboard, mouse and a few other technical gizmos in the production suite; the process of recording was the same; get a backing track down (numerous takes) get you own part down (more numerous takes) and then everyone pile in behind the desk for the pre-mix critique. Also I think I'm right in saying that Roundabout took a lot longer to record than previous albums – all of 6 months! This was not however because of obvious "progressive" influences emanating from certain members of the band (me, Kelvin and, surprisingly, Dan) but for more mundane practical reasons like weather (affecting travel – we're a very geographically scattered band) and other church/music/work commitments.

**Where can people get the new album?**

PT: Online via iTunes and Amazon (just search "The Predators Roundabout") or on CD via [direct.crossrhythms.co.uk](http://direct.crossrhythms.co.uk) or follow the links at [www.preds.eu](http://www.preds.eu)

**How has the music scene changed over the past couple of decades in your opinion? Do you think these changes are for the better?**

FJ: Music changes and I think that's normal, the messages within the music reflect people's experiences, that's normal as well. As to whether it is good or bad in my view is coloured by how well you can relate to it.

KA: It seems that the street credible Christian outreach bands of the 60s and 70s have given way to more contemporary "rock worship" which unfortunately is now confined mostly to church buildings. Whatever happened to the commandment to "Go into all the world and make disciples.....", or does it no longer apply?!?

PT: Kelvin picks up how the Christian music scene has changed but I think your question is more general? My response to this is that certainly in the UK the days of "being spotted" or an artist evolving naturally and growing an army of fans by sheer hard work seem in many cases to be over, for now at least. Talent shows like 'The X Factor' and more recently 'The Voice' have had a big part in changing all that and certainly the aspirations and expectations of many young artists have changed as a result. There has also been a massive growth in professional cover or more properly described 'tribute' bands, in many cases being just as good or even better than the original; Limehouse Lizzy is a classic example. So



far no one has covered The Preds – perhaps it’s because we have refused to throw in the towel or maybe there isn’t a Kev clone out there! My comments about the Christian music scene follow in the next Q...

**Fran had some interesting comments in the biography (link at [www.preds.eu](http://www.preds.eu)) about Christian bands mixing it up with secular bands, and going to places many Christian bands wouldn't go. What do you think stops Christian bands from doing that?**

FJ: Well, number one: is God in it? Because if he isn't, it will fail and it can be painful. The other problem is that it means mixing with people who can be quite hostile toward what you are about.

KA: I can only put it down to fear of leaving one’s comfort zone and lack of confidence to go out in God’s strength to take on the enemy.

PT: With regard to Christian music I am dismayed by the lack of bands being prepared to bust the walls of the church building or Christian venue and get out there. Tim Hawkins of “worship signals” fame amusingly refers to the drummer’s “bullet proof shield” drum booths that seem to characterise Christian worship bands (well those with money anyway) and I think there is a lot of truth in that, and what Kelvin refers to above and below (view the Tim Hawkins video I refer to at <http://youtu.be/1KXbva6M6fy>). It seems there is a lot of fear not just amongst Christian artists, but amongst Christians involved in outreach – especially when it comes to getting noisy and confrontational when presenting difficult day-to-day issues, and shining the Light of the Gospel of Jesus on those issues at the same time. People get nervous; but The Preds have always done just that. Perhaps a little fear to a degree is understandable or even healthy, but it is also true that “religion” and “multi-culturalism” are much more in the headlines than they were 20+ years ago, and therefore Christians in particular need to get their voices heard now in as many places as possible – not just music venues. Ironically there are, in the UK today, new young Christian bands playing fantastic, professionally produced, cutting edge music, with all the financial support you could hope for; but do you see them in the regular pub venues down town? Not likely. I hope there are some out there who will prove me wrong and get in touch!!

Also relevant to this question; in the UK there have been big, politically driven, demographic changes that have seriously affected the pubs and clubs mainly through changes to the Law with regard to drinking hours and smoking; this has made staying in business a massive and sometimes terminal challenge for many pub venues that you might have seen The Predators playing in the past. Fear amongst Christians perhaps is surpassed by fear

amongst publicans and venue owners that any activity on their premises which has the potential to drive away valuable custom during “tough economic times” is perhaps a risk not worth taking. For them and from their point of view in many cases it is a simple choice – selling drink or “selling” Jesus. Another obstacle for Preds’ management is that regular ‘super-pub’ venues are in most cases just wanting tribute/cover bands (as mentioned before there are many excellent ones out there) ...something that The Preds has never been!

**Could you tell us a bit more about Kelvin's band that promotes HIV awareness? What is/was the reception at gay bars when they played?**

KA: CD4 is a registered charity managed by Carlos Lopez, a Spanish musician who is himself HIV positive through past drug use. After a successful, professional musical career in Spain he ended up in on drugs and subsequently in prison, where he found faith in Christ. These days his mission in life is to use his musical/song writing gifts to bring about HIV awareness to students, gay and lesbian groups and young people generally. There is a dedicated CD4 website which provides more detail at [www.carloslopezg.com](http://www.carloslopezg.com). The reception of the band in gay bars and the like was excellent and generally very open and honest.

**There has also been mention on Facebook and other places about the response to the band and the need for more. When you look at what it would take to keep the band going in the future, what issues come to mind? What goals and milestones are you trying to accomplish?**

KA: For my part the key aim is to be faithful to our calling to take the Gospel of Christ into situations where music provides unique opportunities that might not otherwise be available. Secondly, we seek to do this to the very best of our ability, but relying on the Holy Spirit to provide strength and gifting beyond our natural abilities, so that some might be saved.

PT: We need churches to buck the trend! We need churches that are already involved in outreach in their local communities to pray through and overcome the obstacles, to get us in to those hard to access venues in pubs, clubs or elsewhere; we need them to be daring on our behalf. We do not want to be ‘parachuted’ into a place, challenge people, and then just leave people with unanswered questions or even distress at what they have heard – this would be disastrous and dishonouring to God. We want to work with Christians who are already working. The Preds should be regarded as another tool hopefully amongst many in the church outreach toolbox; we don’t want to be the story because we are not that – we just want to be part of the telling of the only Story that is worth hearing.

Goals and Milestones? Well apart from staying alive and playing half-decent music, Fran fires the arrow and hits the bull's-eye in Q6 above! For the rest of 2012 we have a few summer gigs to play (see the events listing on Facebook). Dan is leaving for pastures new in September so once again we are on the hunt for a keyboard player; and then there is the question of a 5<sup>th</sup> album and presently that is all that that is – a question (heck that was a lot of thats!).

**I know that most of the older songs are available for download on the official site. Have there been any thoughts of official CD releases?**

PT: No; I think the main reason for this is that we would not be content with the equivalent of burning to CD the current mp3 content in our online archive, if demand was there we would almost certainly want to record the songs again, but that would be a major investment; so as I say, there would have to be proven demand for this to be done. I think the online, genuinely free, archive of all of The Preds previously released recordings is a decent offering!

**For those that might not have heard the album, what lyrically topics did you tackle?**

PT: Everything from liberation by the Holy Spirit to Terrorism; well not quite everything but that is a pretty broad scope I think your readers will agree! Preds songs have always had plenty of 'lyrical meat' to chew on, we have never been and have never set out to be 'easy listening'; some of the songs on Roundabout could even be described as dark and forbidding; Suicide Bomber in particular comes to mind with Blind Pride following on a close second; so (as I see it) these are the topics covered: a father that puts work before family (Blind Pride) and the Hope that God can bring into dysfunctional families (You'll Give Them Hope), addiction to the financial markets (Burning Ambition), the dangers of virtual living (Comms Breakdown), the weekly routine (a bit of light relief!? – Not Another Monday), a song with a title that speaks for itself (Prodigal), liberation of the Holy Spirit (Set me Free), misguided violent extremism – from past Crusades to Northern Ireland to Bali (Suicide Bomber), and finally a song that covers much of the forgoing plus some global issues like climate change all in one go! (Your Love). The Predators have always set out to shine the light of The Gospel on topics of the day – sometimes into the darkest corners, but The Preds have also always set out to be clear about the contrasting Hope that the Gospel of Jesus provides in all situations – be they local, national or global.

**Some of you were speaking of changes in the music scene in the UK. What differences are there between the UK and US music scenes (Christian or mainstream)? Or are there any?**

PT: Obviously the USA is a much larger market; but apart from size, in contrast to the US, Christian music in the UK is still very much regarded as the underdog; music that needs to be regarded with suspicion or at least kept at arm's length. I think though that many of these problems have been of our own making; for decades Christian music has been regarded as naff and second rate and sad to say, in many cases, this has been true. Today there are Christian bands in the UK that can easily pass any test for quality and content, so things have improved; but as we have mentioned before, we want to see this 'quality and content' in places where it is needed, and not just constrained to the 'Christian ghetto'. Ask joe-public-music-fan on the street if they've ever heard of Delirious or Malokai or even The Predators, and I suspect you will get the response: "who?" This still needs to change – only U2 have properly succeeded so far; Delirious got close, but that even they are virtually unheard of amongst those who matter most. Roundabout has been criticised for its technically "low-fi production" but this was because this album is self-financed and we had therefore to work within our own financial constraints (none of us are or have ever been professional musicians), but we also see dangers in over-production; so maybe it could also be said that in our case we are following a style that started with The Beatles and others of that era – they defined "lo-fi" but they also defined success!? I digress; partly because it is hard for me to comment on the US music scene having never been to the States – Mike Rimmer of UCB Media here in the UK could speak with authority on the subject as he has travelled there many times and has featured many US artistes on his radio shows. I have yet to cross the pond! Hopefully one day, US citizens will realise that The Predators aren't only a famous Nashville Ice-Hockey team and a Japanese HM outfit!! (there are a few other bands called "The Predators" but I'm now going to bravely claim that formed in the dying breaths of the 70s that we were the first!)

#### **The Predators are:**

Kev Smith – lead vocals + founder member (KS)

Fran Johnson – drums + chief songwriter (FJ)

Kelvin Allwood – lead guitar + founder member + songwriter (KA)

Paul Truswell - bass guitar + website management and Roundabout album package production (PT)

Dan Reed - keyboards & backing vocals (DR)

Andreea Ene - backing vocals + Roundabout album concept (AE)

#### **Management Team:**

Darren Hollingworth (live sound and bookings)

Onkar Singh (public relations and pastoral ministry)





# BRIAN GODAWA

## An interview with the Author of *Noah Primeval*

Interview by Mike Indest

Intro by Matt Crosslin

I love science fiction and fantasy. I am less than enthusiastic about what passes as either genre in Christian bookstores. There are a few good books out there in the Sci-Fi/Fantasy genre, but they are few and far between. When I heard that Indest was interviewing Brian Godawa, I was intrigued. Then I saw *Noah Primeval* for free through Kindle and decided to give it a shot. So far, I am hooked.

I like is that nothing about *Noah Primeval* is sanitized. But what I love is that it also is written in a universe where the cosmic structure that ancient cultures believed in is real – the Earth is flat, supported by pillars, etc. Yes, we know this is not true – but alternate universe structures are interesting ideas to explore that few authors do. Ted Chiang did an excellent job of it with his short story *Tower of Babylon* in 1990... but others are few and far between.

I doubt you will see *Noah Primeval* on many Christian bookstore shelves... which makes it a perfect book for our readers to check out. But Godawa has an even deeper connection with the alternative music subculture we all love. Read on as Mike Indest digs deeper into the world of Brian Godawa...

***Noah Primeval* challenges the way most Christians view Genesis, it is also addresses sinful depravity with a stark grittiness. Why do you think it was important to tell the story in that manner?**

The Bible says this "antediluvian" time period before the flood was so wicked that "every thought of man's heart was only evil continually," and "the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence." I wanted to go no shorter and no further than the Bible in depicting this fallen world. Most of the extreme wickedness I just hinted or implied as does the Bible, but like the Bible, I could not avoid such sins without demeaning the power of justice and the grace of God. No matter how bad it gets in this world, the power of God is greater than the power of evil. The violence in the novel is similar to *The Lord of the Rings*: there are some really diabolical monsters and some battles of Orcs, or rather, Nephilim giants, but it is a fantasy environment, and I try to keep it tolerable.

I've heard some of our most revered preachers explain Genesis 6 as "the sons of Cain" and that the spies sent to Canaan were so scared that they only imagined they saw

**giants. Why does your interpretation of these events differ from the common held beliefs?**

The human interpretation of the "sons of God" in the Bible is certainly one of several possible ones within orthodox Christianity. The problem is that it lacks textual support, which explains why some believe the "sons of God" to be "sons of Cain" (evil) and some believe the exact opposite that they are "sons of Seth" (righteous). The dominant interpretation through most of Church History has been the supernatural one that these "sons of God" were divine beings of God's heavenly host. I believe in the supernatural interpretation that these beings were angelic. In the novel, I put some appendices at the back to explain the Biblical research for this conclusion. The one-two punch is that the "sons of God" is explicitly defined in the Bible as the angelic heavenly host in Job 1 and 2 and 1 Kings 22. They are a "divine council" that surrounds God's throne, praises him, engages in legal counsel, and does God's bidding (Also see Psalm 82 and 89). You can't get any more explicit than that. Oh wait, yes you can. The New Testament reaffirms the interpretation that angels sought sexual union with humans in Jude 6:6-7 and 2 Peter 2:4-10. Jude even goes so far as to quote a non-canonical book of Enoch in Jude 14-15 that refers to God coming in judgment for sins like the angelic ones performed above.

Regarding the giants, It is pretty difficult to maintain "giants" as being metaphoric language or illusion when the Scriptures define the Anakim as a "tall people" throughout the conquest texts (Num. 13:33; Deut. 1:28; 2:10, 21; 9:2) and then give us the height of some of these as about 9-10 feet tall (Goliath) and about 12 feet tall (Og of Bashan), as well as the weight of their weapons and armor as being gigantic. That's not imagination, that's observation. The Bible also describes about 12 different tribes or cities of giants as distinct from other cities in Canaan, and even gives us the names of about 12 different specific giants who were killed, from Ishbi-benob (2 Sam. 21:16) to an unnamed giant (1 Chron. 20:6) and others. You can get the full documentation in my appendix on the Nephilim in *Noah Primeval*. In fact, it seems as if Joshua is deliberately targeting the giant clans to utterly destroy out of the land (Josh 11:21-22).

***Noah Primeval* references the book of Enoch. Enoch also seems to also be quoted in the book of Jude. Are there other New Testament references? Do you know what was**



### the early church father's view on Genesis 6?

There is a great article I put on the [website](http://godawa.com/noah_primeval/links.html) in the Links section entitled, "The Ancient Exegesis of Gen. 6:2,4" by Robert Newman for Grace Theological Journal ([godawa.com/noah\\_primeval/links.html](http://godawa.com/noah_primeval/links.html)). It chronicles the fact that the majority view of the Church fathers was that Genesis 6 was talking about angels having sexual relations with humans. But that Augustine, with his autobiographical fear of gnosticism, really helped to make the non-supernatural interpretation rise in popularity. Also, the book of Enoch, though pseudepigraphal and non-canonical also has an erudite history of respect within orthodox Christianity. Which it ought to, since the New Testament apostolical authors took it seriously enough to paraphrase it and quote it in Jude and 1 and 2 Peter. It's kind of weird to me that some Christians seem to think that if some text is NOT Scripture, then it's NOT true, therefore they refuse to even consider texts like 1 Enoch because they assume them to be "lies" or false. Sorry, but that attitude is just not Biblical, especially since the Biblical authors actually TOLD US that they used over twenty different non-canonical books as sources to write the Biblical text, such as The Book of the Wars of Yahweh (Numbers 21:14), The Book of Jasher (Joshua 10:12-13; 2 Samuel 1:19-27) and others.

**Do you think that this book will be more accepted with a non-Christian audience since they will probably not read it with the same preconceptions? Who is your target audience?**

My target audience is Fantasy lovers who also like spiritual fantasy, including those who enjoyed *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, those who are not afraid of enjoying their imagination when it comes to their faith, or even lack of faith. But also, those who enjoy speculative historical religious fiction.

**Beside the book your website mentions a movie, comic book, video game and a sequel. What's next for this series?**

I am currently writing the prequel novel, *Enoch Primordial* and hope to have it out this year. Let me tell you, this is even a wilder ride than *Noah Primeval*, and it shows us the origin stories of the fallen Sons of God, the Nephilim, but also of Semjaza (Anu), Azazel (Inanna), Methuselah and Noah's parents, as well as reintroduce us to the archangels Uriel, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. I will continue to use my ancient Near Eastern research into the mythologies of the time period and will have more fascinating appendices at the

back of the book explaining the ancient foundations of my approach.

My goal is to get the series done and growing in readership to be able to warrant investor interest in a video game, graphic novels, and movies.

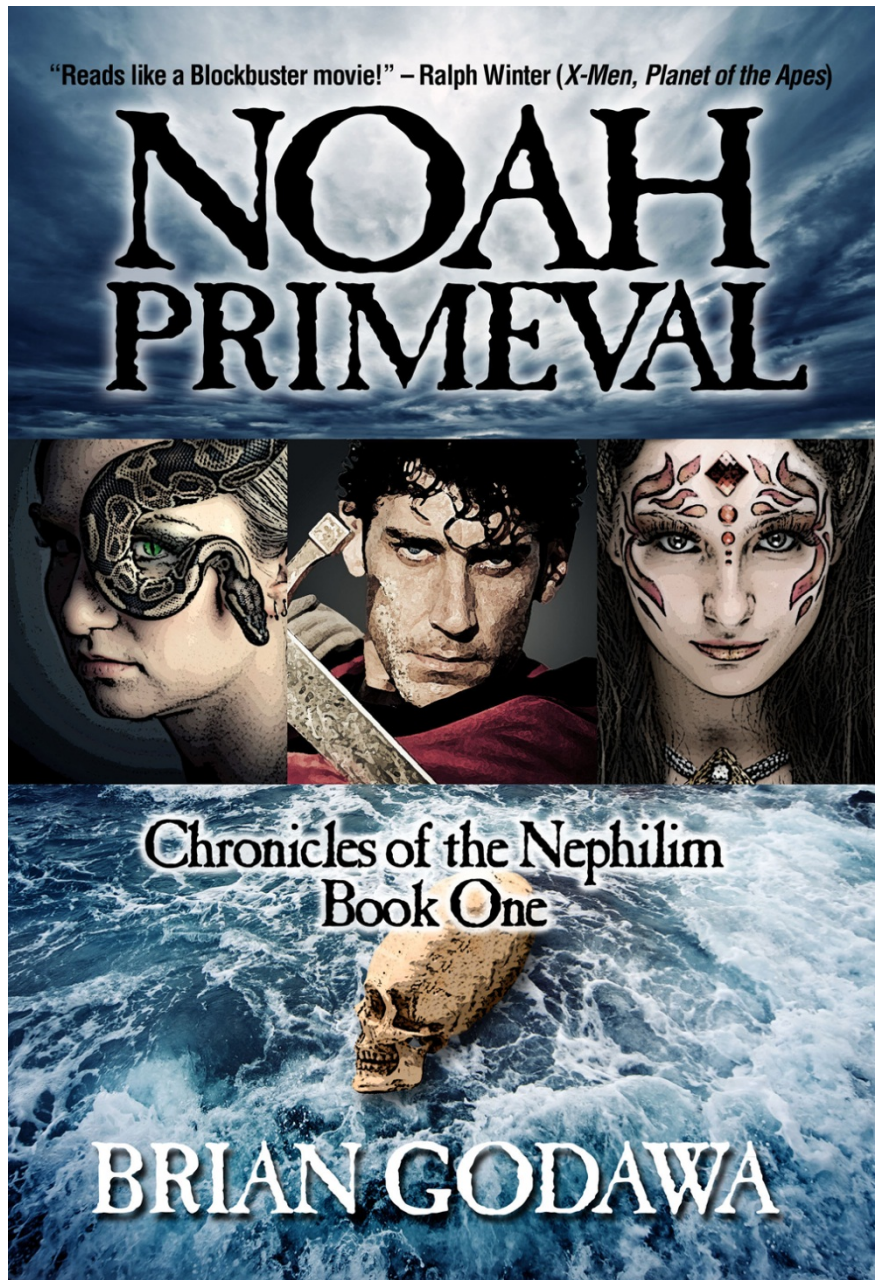
**In a past life you designed Album covers for Frontline. Can you tell us one or two that you are proud of?**

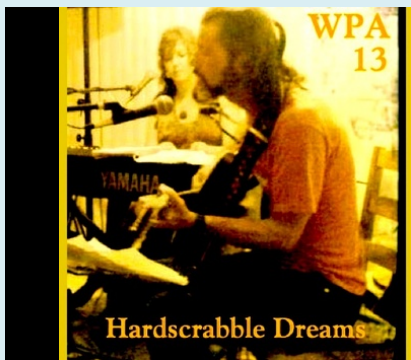
Mortal's first album, *Fathom* (Industrial grunge)

Crumbacher's Greatest Hits *Time after Time*

Magdalen's *Big Bang* (Love that Kenny Tamplin! I recently had him do the sound track to a short film I made "Cruel Logic" on my website:

[godawa.com/Filmmaking/Shorts-Cruel\\_Logic.html](http://godawa.com/Filmmaking/Shorts-Cruel_Logic.html)





**Bill Mallonee – Hardscrabble Dreams**  
2012 Independent

I never expect to go long between Bill Mallonee's releases, and I am grateful for that. Bill's writing has long been a source of comfort and inspiration to me. His music is always relevant and fresh, lyrically he is the best in the game and he is one of the most prolific storytellers around. I hold the hope that one day he will write a novel – I think it could be a notable work considering the years, the history, and the traveling experience that he has in this art form of Americana. Back to the music...

This collection of songs was inspired by three things according to Mallonee. I took the liberty to quote him directly from his website about *Hard-Scrabble Dreams*. The three sources of inspiration according to Bill, "One was John Steinbeck's eloquent work, "The Grapes of Wrath," the second inspiration was a gift from Muriah, a photographic essay, called, "Bound For Glory" (America In Color 1938-1943) It is an arresting testimonial. The images of "just plain Americans," I believe, are some of the most heroic and inspiring you'll ever see. The last inspiration was a gift as well. It was a gift from the American people. It came from the folks I've played for over these past 22 years. This land & its great people have always been the frame of reference of my work, from the day I first crawled into a rattle-trap van to do my first US tour in 1991. They, and their stories and lives, have been inspiring me ever since."

*Hard-Scrabble Dreams* has a total of ten tracks. We get treated to "Bakersfield" from *The Power and the Glory* sessions (and *WPA Vol. 9 Drifter Songs*), and it actually fits perfectly into the spirit of the other songs here. There are three alternate tracks and seven brand spanking new songs on here. One of the most effective songs on here for me is "Faith (It All Comes Soaked in Gasoline)." This is one that I think can rival favorites like "Blister Soul" or "Welcome to Struggleville" because of the accurate acknowledgement of

the bitterness of life, of choices we are confronted and conflicted with, and with the paradox of something bigger than ourselves that begs for our reliance and trust. Bill brings these truths home in a way that we can understand. Again, I think lyrically this is the heart and soul of an American poet at his best. Mallonee creates because he is compelled to, and I think if none of us were listening he would still be doing it... fortunately for us we are listening, and I believe that this WPA offering is the best of the bunch.

Head over to the BandCamp store and drop a few coins on this release. I know that you will be pleased with this, it is a solid and seasoned release from an artist that truly embodies the very story that he captures so well through his music.

– Steve Ruff



**Scott Silletta – The Life And Times Of...**  
2011 Independent

This is one of those great timeless records that's good from beginning to end. "Break In Rhyme" opens the Kickstarter funded album with a very reflective piece, echoing the line "So it goes, what we have could be gone in the blink of an eye" – something we can all relate to. "I Can't Wait" rolls in next. With it's building uplifting rhythms it took me back a bit to the classic *Commonwealth* album from Scott's earlier band Plankeye, but with a more modern sound. Throughout this album you hear the singer/songwriter that Silletta has had in him all these years coming to fruition. *The Life And Times Of...* has a very relaxed vibe, with great vocal harmonies, layered chiming guitars, and country-esq shuffle beats. "Closer To This Moment" is my favorite on this release, a great tune about reconnecting and hope all wrapped up in a cool Americana/Indie Rock feel. "Do You Believe Believers?" is the rocker on the album, again showing shades of a modern Plankeye. Beautiful songs are all over the record from "All Because Of You", an ode to the joys of fatherhood, to "It Shows That I Am Weak",

and the closer "This Life's Worth Livin' ", a humbling spiritual. "This life's worth livin', so get with the givin' " Amen Scott, Amen.

– Josh Lory



**SLIDE – Auto Tune Massacre**  
2012 Independent

Something tells me that the guys in SLIDE are not afraid to speak their mind. Which is a good thing, because the lyrics of *Auto Tune Massacre* go straight from the hearts of the band members right into your soul.... sometimes in a harsh light, sometimes in a fun light, but always with a healthy dose of "stop and think about this for a moment." Those afraid of brutal honesty might want to take a deep breath before diving in.

I'm not sure exactly how to describe the sound of SLIDE, but I think the best arena to place it in would be guitar-heavy alternative rock/pop/electronic music. With a huge chunk of bonus dance remixes tacked on at the end (seven on the physical CD, six on the digital version). You may think that hearing seven remixes might get boring, but Mdavsto is a master remix artist and even being a minimal electronic fan I still found myself enjoying all of it.

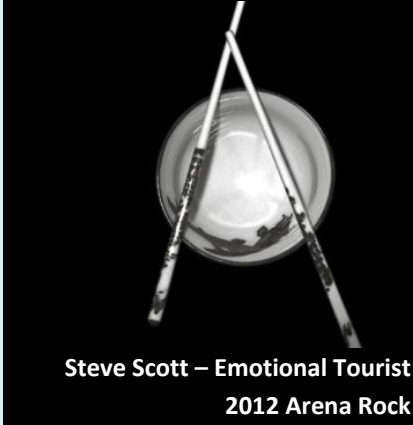
So I guess the biggest question you are asking is "I have heard some songs from SLIDE in the past, so I know exactly what to expect right?" Yes and no. Half of the (non-remix) songs have been out before – four singles and one Partridge Family cover. The four previously released singles have all been upgraded – some slightly, some majorly. "January" sounds almost like an entirely different song. If possible, these songs have gone to a whole new level with these upgrades. The never-before-heard songs live up to the new level, and The Partridge Family cover is just cool. I still find "Dime Store Queer" to be the highlight of the album – such a catchy song with a much needed message. But then they go and save the best for last. Or, kind of last. The closing (non-remix) song "Auto Tune Massacre" in many ways serves as a good



summary of the album as a whole, decrying the trend in modern society to give up real life interactions for fake digitized copycat methods.

The band is incredibly tight all around, the vocals are spot-on, and the production is crisp and clear. You would be hard pressed to find a better album out this year on a major label that satisfies like this independent gem.

— Matt Crosslin



Emotional Tourist is probably the best way to describe the experience of consuming the art of Steve Scott. Scott takes you on a journey through the heart and soul of human emotions like no other can. So how do you go about creating a retrospective of a career starting in the 1970s that spanned many forms of music as well as spoken word and poetry reading? While there are volumes of brilliant material left off, what you do have on Emotional Tourist is the cream of the crop. A crop that could have easily been an 8-10 disc box set (if you could get some of the unreleased albums out of the dustbins). The people responsible for this compilation probably gave themselves insomnia just trying to contain it all on one disc.

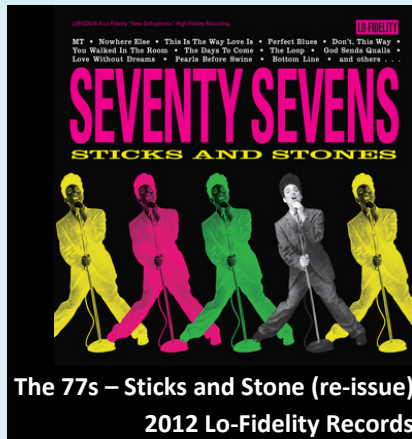
The songs are brilliantly divided into rock music and spoken word halves. Any fan of 80s style alternative/new wave/pop will love the first 9 tracks. My personal favorite is “Love in the Western World”, but fans of The 77s will love Steve’s rendition of a tune he wrote for the band (“A Different Kind of Light”). But all of classics are here – “Ghost Train”, “Sound of Waves”, “Not a Pretty Picture”, and so on.

Steve’s lyrics are just as brilliant as his poetry, so the transition to spoken word is not as jarring as one might think. And it is the spoken word poetry readings on the second half of the disc that take this collection to the next level. Scott has always excelled as a poet. “This Sad Music” was one of his earliest

recorded readings, a profound song based on what he saw one day while flipping through channels. My favorite is still “No Memory of You”, probably because actual recordings of the subjects of the poem are used to create the sonic bed that supports the spoken word. Scott never just reads a poem by itself; he always creates a music soundscape that plays along with the poem. This is what ties the second half of the disc with the first half – his readings sound almost like deconstructed songs, as if they are the evolution of what happened on the first part of the album. Or maybe his songs were always just poems set to music all along? Either way, they flow together well.

The packaging on this collection is well done, with recollections on each song written by Scott himself. Fans of Scott that have all of his CDs will want this disc for the booklet alone. Now we can only hope that this album will be the catalyst to getting the powers that be sitting on top of the unreleased *Moving Pictures* into gear.

— Matt Crosslin



It is hard to find anything to say about Sticks and Stones that hasn’t already been said a time or two in the last 22 years. On a personal note, this was my introduction to the 77’s as a band. It wasn’t until years later that I checked out their albums prior to this one, but Sticks has remained a favorite of mine for years, not just because of the absolutely beautiful songs that are contained here, but also because of the memories that are associated with it. Sticks was a truly alternative album when it came out, it was the alternative to pretty much anything else in the Christian market at that time. Tracks like “MT” come rolling out with this sonic wave of guitar that stands up and demands attention, then the tempo changes into a refined and laid back groove that sounds absolutely beautiful because Roe’s vocals are so fluid and intensely

emotional that they add a dimension to the music that makes this real art. If tracks like “MT”, “The Days to Come” and “This is the Way Love is” get stuck in your head, then tracks like “Nowhere Else”, “Don’t, This Way”, “God Sends Quails” and “Bottom Line” will break your heart. The music here is so intense and really provides a perfect vehicle to Roe’s lyrics and singing. As “The Loop” testifies, you don’t always need to have singing to hit the mark. All these tracks and more comprise the first disc of the re-issue.

Disc number two is called *This is the Way Love Was* and is a compilation of demos and live tracks. The really cool thing about these tracks are that unreleased rarities – like “Problem Girl”, “Cross the City Sky” and “Walk Through the Door” – were written by Mark Tootle and are a great chance to hear Mark singing lead vocals as well as showing just how formative his style and sound were in the early days of the Sevens. There are a couple of pretty amazing versions of “This is the Way Love Is” on disc two as well, but all in all you get another 11 tracks of really solid music on the second disc.

If you bought the “Ultra Deluxe” package, you also get the third disc titled *Seeds and Stems* (insert your own reference here). There are another cool 10 tracks on this disc – which is one of my favorites, because I can never get enough of favorites like “Ba Ba Ba Ba” or “I Could Laugh (But it’s Not Funny).” This disc is also built up with original mixes, demos and live tracks that make you sing along, reminisce, and I’d be lying if I didn’t tell you that the guitar on this version of “God Sends Quails” is unbelievable brilliant. There is also a bandcamp exclusive live version of “You Don’t Scare Me” at the end of the digital portion of this package. “You Don’t Scare Me” is a bluesy, rocking track that lives up to everything you know and more in this live setting that has Roe at the top of his game.

Just to make this release even better, the guys have released this in as many formats as you could possibly want. There are the hardcopy pressings, the digital releases, the individual digital tracks and then there are several packages that come with different merch options like t-shirts and other assorted goodies. I’m really excited about this re-release; it is from a classic album that sounds so much better with the digital restoration and remastering. This is a must have for any fan, casual or die-hard alike, there is something here for everyone. Hearing these tracks has reminded me once again of just

how stunningly good this band was, and still is. My hats off to the guys who preserved this stuff, and to the ones who restored it to sound so good all these years later, and thanks to Li-Fidelity Records for releasing this in so many different packages.

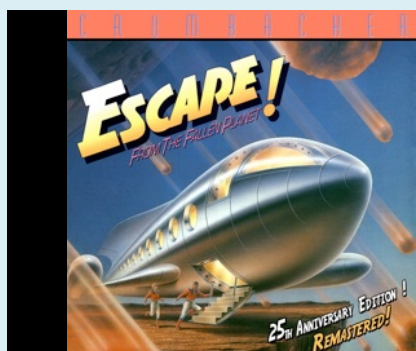
– Steve Ruff



**Doug Burr – Trembling Lips and Pale Fingertips**  
2012 Velvet Blue Music

Doug Burr returns with an EP of re-recorded versions of songs from his *O, Ye Devastator* album. The difference between these songs and the original ones are that these are stripped down numbers with interesting “version names” added on the end. On the 7-inch vinyl you get “A Black Wave Is Comin’ (Forest Fortress Version)” and “Chief of Police in Chicago (Indefinite Surveillance Version).” The bonus digital download comes with both of these songs plus “Do You Hear Wedding Bells (Low Down Version)” and the album version of “A Black Wave Is Comin’.” Fans of Burr will probably already have a copy of this, but those that enjoy Americana/folk/sparse music will want to add this to their collection. And hunt down Mr. Burr’s older albums while you are at it.

– Matt Crosslin



**Crumbächer – Escape The Falling Planet (25th Anniversary Edition)**  
2011 Meis Music Group

Crumbächer’s classic second album has been given a facelift for its 25th anniversary. The sound is new wave / rock / synthpop straight

from the 80s. Some people will write this off as dated no matter what I say – but I believe that good music is still good music no matter how it ages. I liked this sound back in the day, so I still like it now. The sonics on this disc are beautiful – I only have the vinyl to compare it to, but this sounds much brighter and clearer than what I hear coming from the LP. The packaging is a bit odd, though. The cover and back jackets of the album jacket are faithfully reproduced on the outside of the booklet, but you open that up to see a large photo of the band playing live at the reunion concert in 2005. I would have liked to have seen some unreleased photos or press from back in the day – but that may not have been available. Or maybe too embarrassing ☺ (I hide all my pics from that era as well). All that is minor, though – this is overall a great re-issue of a classic album.

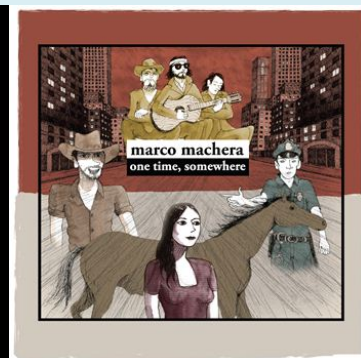
– Matt Crosslin



**Destroy Nate Allen – With Our Powers Combined**  
2012 Independent

The crazy coolness that is Destroy Nate Allen returns with the Gnarboots serving as their backing band. Backing band you say? Have they gone corporate pop? Not at all! Folk punk is still the basis for Destroy Nate Allen’s sound here... but the added instruments take that sound in many unexpected directions. One minute you have the acoustic balladesque “Long Weekend Blues” and the next you are bouncing off the walls with the full on ska sounds of “Distracted Nate-O-Bot”. The fun and energy you have come to expect from a Destroy Nate Allen album is now at a whole new level. Lyrically, Nate and Tessa mix humor with serious thoughts on everything from “Vegetables” to “Boobie Bars.” Yeah – you write a song called “Boobie Bar” and you pretty much guarantee that CCM radio will not touch it. Which is too bad, because the lyrics ring with more truth than most “Jesus is my boyfriend” songs out there. If you like quirky, energetic folk/punk/ska, then keep an eye out for the June 5th release of this album.

– Matt Crosslin



**Marco Machera – One Time, Somewhere**  
2012 Innsbruck Records

This was an interesting review set-up. We tend to get stuck on random email lists by random labels that obviously don’t know our magazine and think we will want to review their next teen-bop wannabe. Marco actually contacted us himself and knew our names when asking for a review (pro-tip #1 right there random labels). So I grabbed the download and gave it a listen. One Time, Somewhere is a bit different than most albums we review, but there was a lot to like about it. The first track is a bit on the modern pop side for me, but the second track “Stories Left Untold” is where the quirky stuff I like kicks in. The bass line could have been lifted off a Daniel Amos track from the 80s. But the song itself is a collection of spoken word bits, percussion samples, and random stuff that is just... different. In a good way. The rest of the songs bounce between pop (but not quite as modern sounding as the first track) and quirky. The almost industrial driving rock “Bright Lights Big City” pops up in the middle for a nice surprise. The last three songs are cool instrumentals. Overall, an interesting and well-performed effort by Mr. Machera.

– Matt Crosslin



**either/orwell – either/orwell**  
2012 Independent

Expansive minimalism from Jeff MacKey of Writ on Water and Jarod Weldin of Dangerous Trap. The majority of the music on this self-titled album is created using ambient guitars, with just a slight hint of percussion and pianos/keyboards here and there. This is



mellow music perfectly suited for contemplation, meditation, reading, and relaxing. No song really ends... they all just fade slightly into the next one, with almost every song clocking in at well over the five minute range. With interesting song titles like "tell them to unprepare" and "the ineffable art of puppetry", you kind of almost find yourself wishing for some lyrics just to see what they have to say. But ultimately, that is for you to fill in as you enjoy the rhythm of the music. Despite there being very little percussion to speak of, you can still discern an intentional structure to the music. Where some meditation music gets lost in random improvisation for the entire album, either/orwell uses riffs and structured melodies to keep the music moving forward between moments of improv. Or do they? There is a subtlety to the musical minimalism that makes you wonder if you just heard that riff, or wonder if it was slightly different. Available at most digital stores and as a physical CD.

– Matt Crosslin



**Mind of the Sick – Anti-Devil Superstar**  
2012 Independent

A big change has occurred in the Mind of the Sick camp. Noah Tubbs is still about welcoming people as they are and not conforming to stereotypes. MotS still churns out catchy, groovy industrial metal that lives in the same neighborhood as Klank and Rob Zombie. But now, Mind of the Sick is not a "he," but a "they." Noah has added a full band to support his musical vision. While I can't pinpoint it exactly, there is more of a "band" sound to the music, as opposed to the last album which was obviously one person doing everything. There are places where that "one-man band" sound still comes through in the music, but I bet after a few live shows the next album will have all of that worked out. "Love Your Haters" is my personal highlight of the album, but there are many songs to chew on (and mosh to). My only complaint really is that I would love to hear a real full, meaty mix for the songs. This is a DIY album and that

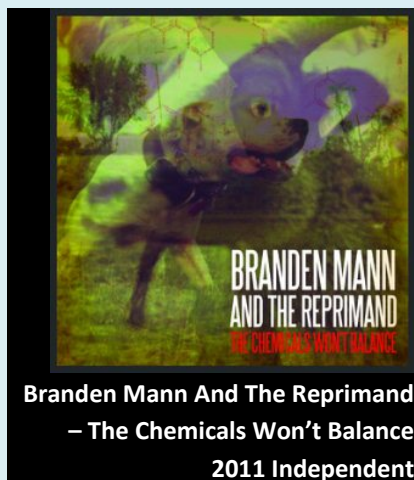
shows a bit in the overall sound quality. But the trade-off for that is you get an album that is free from corporate interference, allowing it to shine in the "brutal honesty" and "just being myself" departments. Overall, I like this album and highly recommend it to fans of this genre.

– Matt Crosslin



This iTunes only ep is a bit of a history capsule. When Crumbacher called it a day, former members Dawn Johnson and Chris Duke decided to form a band and go in a completely different musical direction. This is female-fronted alternative rock, right up there on par with anything that was popular in the 1990s. To my ears, they sound like a good mix of Garbage and Viva Voce. As with any ep of good music, the main problem here is that this is too short. These songs were featured in many TV shows through the years, so you might even find a few of them familiar. One of the songs up on their MySpace page is not on this ep, so one can hope we will get treated to another collection soon.

– Matt Crosslin



**Branden Mann And The Reprimand**  
– The Chemicals Won't Balance  
2011 Independent

I became aware of Braden Mann and the Reprimand through a YouTube video of them covering a Michael Knott song with a cool,

organic, down-to-earth sound. Luckily, I found all of their songs on BandCamp and decided to check them out. *The Chemicals Won't Balance* is their latest studio album. I'm not sure how to exactly describe their sound – but it has a rollicking, groovy sound that sets it apart from your typical folk music. They never really slow down or go too fast – they just hit that right speed for enjoying a fun batch of songs. Or should I say sarcastic or witty? There is a sly bit of humor and a wink of an eye to all of the lyrics... even when dealing with serious issues. So hit up their BandCamp page, play the title song from *The Chemicals Won't Balance*, and tell me if it doesn't get your foot tapping. Trust me... you will be glad you did.

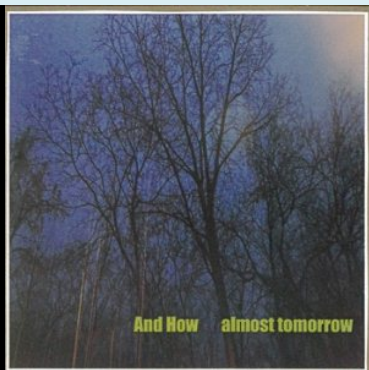
– Matt Crosslin



**Jump Ship Quick – Where Thieves Cannot Tread**  
2012 Thumper Punk Records

Great three piece Punk Rock band from Colorado featuring ex-members of Focused and Ultimatum. 16 tracks of melodic Hardcore reminiscent of a cross between Gorilla Biscuits/CIV and early Lagwagon. Nothing groundbreaking, but don't let that stop you – these guys play tight and write great songs! The Gang vocals on "Through the Ears" reminds me of early Crucified and was very welcome through these ears, awesome opening track! Stand out tracks for me are "Here Come The Clowns", "I Defy Your Violence", and "My One True Hope". Lyrical content is spiritual, political, heartfelt, and uncompressed. The album sounds clean and huge, thanks to the production of Leanor Till (Five Iron Frenzy) and the mixing and mastering of Masaki Liu. So if you're a fan of bands like early 7 Seconds, Minor Threat, NOFX, any of the previously mentioned bands or good Punk Rock in general, this album is for you!

– Josh Lory



**And How – Almost Tomorrow**  
2012 Independent

Two-time Basement Tapes alumnus Sean Severson returns with the newest free album from his project And How. *Almost Tomorrow* finds Severson continuing down the road of melancholic rock that fans of his music have come to love. You can hear the songs for free on Bandcamp and hear Severson's thoughts on the most recent Basement tapes episode. Influences from many of the bands that DTL covers are obvious on every song, but Severson definitely puts his own stamp on his sound. This is the kind of music we live to promote, so give it a listen.

– Matt Crosslin

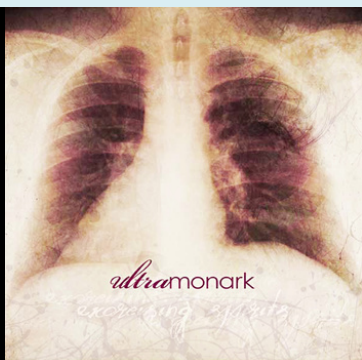


**The Old-Timers – Soli Deo Gloria**  
2012 Thumper Punk Records

Where does Thumper Punk dig up all these great punk rock bands? Well in the case of The Old-Timers, seems like they went all the way to South Africa. With a name like "The Old-Timers", you have got to bring the old school punk. These guys do that and more... your stereo will grow a Mohawk just from playing this music. The energy, conviction, passion, and angst are all there, mixed in with a healthy side of blatantly Christian lyrics. Listening to this reminds me of Crashdog's classic Mud Angels album – not because they sound the same, but because they have dialed into that perfect mix of sound, attitude, social responsibility, and spirituality like Crashdog did on that album. This release is the full

package – great recording, good songs from start to finish, a great message, and a cool cover on top of all that.

– Matt Crosslin



**Ultra Monark – Exorcising Spirits**  
2012 Independent

Ultra Monark is the latest incarnation of Joe Albanese's brilliance. Albanese has been a part or leader of many bands through the years – Four Living Creatures, Elder, and Fell Desire. All of these bands seem to favor the same formula: take every LS Underground album, every Scattered Few album, and a few random Middle Eastern compilations, throw them in a blender, mix well, and enjoy. I know the blender analogy is cliché, but in this case it is really dead on. The sounds that influence Albanese are mixed so well that you end up with a sound all in its own category. And just like Elder took 4LC to the next level, and Fell Desire took Elder to a whole new level, Ultra Monark takes the "Albanese sound" to an even higher level. You can grab this album at BandCamp, but it seems that the band has changed names to Land of the Living. So who knows where they will go from here, but I am sure it will once again kick things to yet another, higher level.

– Matt Crosslin

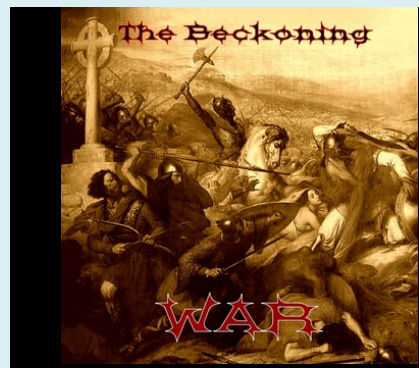


**Gold Beach – Gold Beach**  
2012 Velvet Blue Music

Just like the Doug Burr 7-inch, this 7-inch from Gold Beach comes with two songs on vinyl

and an ep's worth of material on the download card (six songs total). "Gold Beach" is a sweet pop song set to a slightly more complex rhythm than your average pop ditty – overall a nice effect. Most of the other songs also fall into the same category – basically what I would call quirky pop with deeper lyrics.

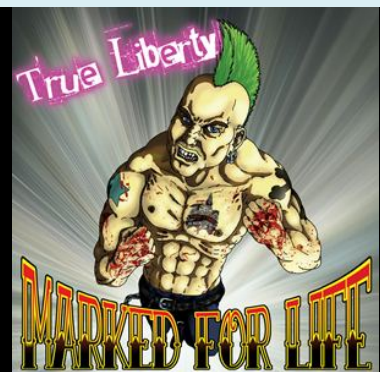
– Matt Crosslin



**The Beckoning – War**  
2012 Independent

The Beckoning is a study in extremes and opposites that really works where so many bands usually fall into cacophony. Their goal is to "fuse the aggression of Extreme Metal with the majestic ambience of Gothic soundscapes." I'll be honest – I was skeptical of that description when I first read it – especially since they also state that their debut album *Demystifying The Oracle* did not quite achieve the sound they wanted. But, for at least the two songs on this demo, they achieve their goal quite well. This demo is supposed to be leading up to a full length release in this stride – so I am really looking forward to that album when it is finished. You can listen for free at their BandCamp page to see for yourself.

– Matt Crosslin



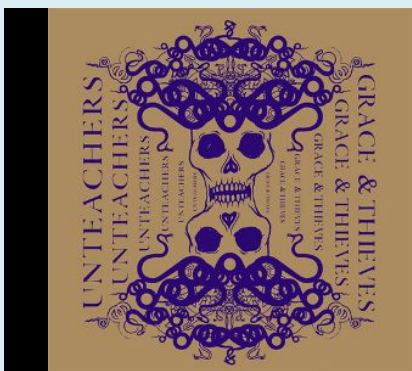
**True Liberty – Marked for Life**  
2012 Thumper Punk Records

Thumper Punk Records was new to me, but this is the kind of stuff I love! Nothing screams



indie and underground to me more than loud, amped up, white hot sounding punk rock. I miss hearing new bands that really sound like punk rock (not pop punk, but *punk* rock) steeped in socially and spiritually conscious lyrics, demanding a call to action and supporting the scene that gave birth to them. That is where True Liberty comes screaming in the door! I was hooked on this as soon as I heard it. The gang style vocals remind me of bands like H2O while the music recalls classic sounds from The Descendents or Agnostic Front. This is fun stuff with an edge, 17 tracks that clock in a bit less than 40 minutes – that means plenty of music that doesn't overstay its welcome. True Liberty leaves your voice hoarse and a ring in your ears. Check these guys out and check out the label as well, support this music with your money, for fans of the bands mentioned above, you won't be disappointed!

– Steve Ruff



**Unteachers / Grace & Thieves split**  
2012 Veritas Vinyl

This record is one awesome chaotic hardcore punk rock jam from start to finish. I'm not totally sure how to describe the music here. Unteachers features Stephen Mark Sarro, formerly of Tantrum of the Muse. TotM fans will quickly love both songs by the Unteachers here. Grace & Thieves describe their music as "emotionally disturbing hardcore" – that sounds about right. Overall, you only get two songs from Unteachers and one song from Grace & Thieves – all three leaving you wanting more. Full lengths of both bands are coming, but for now pick up this 7-inch record. It comes in three cover colors, each custom hand-screened to match the vinyl color. You also get an immediate download when you purchase.

– Matt Crosslin



**The Choir – The Loudest Sound Ever Heard**  
2012 Galaxy 21 Music

I was surprised and excited that The Choir were already putting out a new full length – it seemed like *Burning Like the Midnight Sun* and *de-plumed* had just come out recently. I was pleasantly surprised to get a new album so soon! The unique thing that really struck me about this new release is that the music itself is so incredible and crafted so well that this album could be released as an instrumental and be just as powerful. I'm not knocking Derri's vocals at all – I love them and I really dig his voice. It is one of the qualifying factors for the band, but musically this album is absolutely amazing. There is a rainbow of sound that I find each time I dig in and listen to this record.

There is strength and comfort in this recording that underlines the truths that these guys have personalized through their music and their songs. Hindalong's lyrics continue to be absolutely brilliant and immediate as he conveys a sense of wonder and grace that only comes from experience and something that is so much bigger than self. There is a sense of nature that is revealed in these songs, both physical and spiritual nature that is united, conveyed and intertwined in a beautiful ambience. Christine Glass Byrd's backing vocals are absolutely amazing; her sound fits so perfectly and really gives a deeper definition and radiance to these songs.

This is a must have for any Choir fan that has to be listened to through the headphones to really appreciate every sound, every nuance and every shade of the music. This is one of my favorite bands of all time, and these guys continue to get better and better with each release. Support independent music with your money and support these guys when they roll through town next time on tour. We are fortunate to have these guys still making such great records!

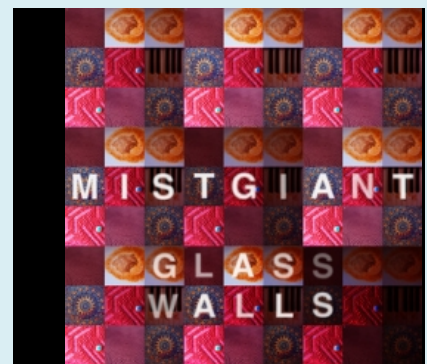
– Steve Ruff



**Government Hate Mail – S/T EP**  
2012 Veritas Vinyl

Featuring two members of Crux, Empty Tomb, and The Clergy along with their sons – Government Hate Mail sounds exactly like what you think it would. Loud, punk, and intense. Well, punk-ish at least. I also hear some classic rock and 90s alternative influence in the mix. This four song ep is short and very limited in number. Fans of any of the bands previously mentioned will love this – so grab a copy before they are gone.

– Matt Crosslin



**Mist Giant – Glass Walls**  
2012 Velvet Blue Music

Velvet Blue described this EP as "Indie electro-post-post rock" – so I had to check something like that out. Space and/or math rock might also fit in there – there are some really complex parts to many of the songs. Song lengths and structure are also all over the place– in a good way. You definitely don't feel like you hear the same song over and over again. This is first in a series of digital only eps, so look for it at the digital outlet of your choice.

– Matt Crosslin





*Asian Girl Playing an Upright Thai Fiddle (2012) by Steve Scott*